THE COMMONWEAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Necessary Thing 169
Week by Week 170
The Bonus Army 173
Wages Are Too High .....Lyle W. Cooper 175
Landscape by Van Gogh.....Alex McGavick 178
Why Aliens Seek Citizenship.....Harold Fields 180
The Quintessence of Catholicism.....Russell Wilbur 182
Two Catalan Poets .....M. Manent 184
Self-portrait (*verse*).....F. T. 185
Communications 185
Stage and Screen .....Richard Dana Skinner 188
Books.....Allan Ireland, Shaemas O'Sheel, Georgiana Putnam McEntee, George N. Shuster, Catherine Radziwill, Speer Strahan, Laura Benet, Kilian J. Hennrich..... 189

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THE NECESSARY THING

ACCORDING to that vivacious commentator on political phenomena, who writes under the name of Jay Franklin, both the Republican and Democratic parties have sent their most experienced observers on journeys throughout the country from the party headquarters at New York and Washington, only to learn from their reports that the American people are regarding the coming presidential elections with profound and astonishing indifference. In the midst of the third year of the most disastrous economic depression in American history, when "real and inexcusable hardships" are now being experienced "by the 120,000,000 inhabitants of the wealthiest country in the world," when six to eight million of men are unemployed, and when the politicians "are running around in circles uttering ominous and incautious howls," it would seem to be the time of times "when by all the computations of the Communists, and in the light of history there should be a great radical upheaval in American politics." Yet, under conditions at least comparable with, if not yet so acute in their pressure, as those under which "Russia produced its Third International, Germany its Hitlerites (and more recently its Junker reaction), and England its National Government, the United States presents a picture of political stolidity and of public apathy without parallel in modern politics."

Those who have been sent out by the national committees and party leaders to discover what the people are really thinking about have returned reporting that except for the minority directly affected by unemployment or economic disaster, the great mass of the voters —or those qualified to be voters, which is a different thing—"are thinking about the baseball season, Greta Garbo, Amos 'n Andy, and the Lindbergh baby." There is no real "party of protest." Neither "progressivism," or socialism, or Communism have any considerable following. At present, on the eve of the presidential campaigns, there is no radical political movement apparent, and no new radical leaders possessing any personal magnetism, or power of appeal. Mr. Franklin thinks that the conservative wings of both the Republicans and the Democrats are annoyed and distressed by the calmness and lack of interest of the public. He believes that these conservative elements had planned to raise a "radical scare," the "red menace," against "any progressive candidate or liberal platform," just as the liberals had "hoped to arouse the voters to great gusts of enthusiasm for the various

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panaceas which have been so widely peddled ever since we became conscious of the Five Year Plan."

That Mr. Franklin's analysis (presented in the June number of Current History) is substantially accurate is not to be doubted by those who do not judge the depth and strength of political movements solely by the clamor and conflict of the orators in Washington, or by the torrents of political news and comments in the newspapers. The economic depression is really paralleled by the political depression. The same lack of coherent views exists among political leaders as among the dethroned and discredited leaders of our economic processes. The same lack of faith and hope exists among the masses of the people, considered as party members and voters, as there is among the same people considered as units of the economic system.

Meanwhile, there is growing among the American people a widespread and deep-rooted, if inarticulate, and partly subconscious, disposition to distrust and to condemn politicians, root and branch. This feeling—for it cannot be called a conviction, or a reasoned opinion—of the futility and disorganization of our present political methods, is at present far from being acute, or susceptible of being used for the basis and driving force of any radical change of our governmental processes. But such explosions as the Communist revolution, or such reactions back to systems of dictatorship or extremely centralized forms of government, which have occurred in Italy, Spain, England and Germany, are certainly not out of the question in the United States. For the fundamental elements which produce drastic changes of a political or social system are present in the American situation, as in Europe, and may be counted upon to work toward the same results, if not corrected or alleviated by prompt and effective reform, or non-revolutionary changes, of the prevailing system.

Whether such changes can be made soon enough to allay the growing distrust of the present system; whether leaders may yet appear who will be persuasive enough, and sensible enough, to arouse the disillusioned masses out of their discouragement and apathy before the apostles of revolution, or, at any rate, of perilous experimentation, succeed in gaining their approval, is a question for which the events of the next six months will probably supply the answer. Certainly, as yet there are only a few signs that the absolutely necessary factor of any real and permanent improvement of the present situation, which thing is, of course, the realization of the moral element in that situation, is being generally recognized. Still, it would be needlessly pessimistic to under-estimate the few signs which do appear. And certainly one of the most significantly hopeful things which have happened lately has been the strong approval given to the Pope's recent appeal to the world to recognize that mankind as a whole must do penance for its sins of greed and pride and national imperialism before there can be any change for the better in world conditions. That highly important organ of liberal Protestant thought, *The Christian Century,* for example, which rarely sees eye to eye with the head of the Catholic Church, has not only hailed his latest letter warmly and gladly, but has exerted its unique influence among the most energetic and practical leaders of liberal Protestant forces to obtain the actual coöperation of Protestant Christians with their Catholic fellow citizens to realize the Pope's plan in action. Independently of this support, Protestant clergymen are spontaneously and powerfully pleading for their people to return to the recognition and the service of God's law. Dr. Macon, in St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, New York, declared that there has been a world-wide apostasy of the nations. "What statesman or Congress, what Parliament, what League has had the faith and the humility to say: 'This is God's world'?" Dr. J. W. Houck, on the same day, in the pulpit of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, New York, said: "From the Vatican has come a note that sounds genuine and true to every sensitive ear. The accursed hunger for gold; the silly egotism of vain individuals; the exaggerated ideas about nationalism; these, as set forth in the Papal message are root causes of our world-wide restlessness. We have sinned as nations and we must confess our guilt and seek anew the guidance of our conscience and our decent selves. We need to be thankful as Protestants for a leader of courage in another faith. We need to consider the voice from the Vatican as a true voice of common sense, as even more, the voice of a fearless prophet of God."

It is hard to estimate correctly the power of spiritual and moral forces. Voices such as these, however, do suggest that they issue out of depths of conviction which once aroused to positive action may stem the tides of depression—economic, moral, or political—which just now are running so strongly and sullenly.

WEEK BY WEEK

NOT UNTIL Mr. Hoover had imitated the heroes of old to the extent of riding down Pennsylvania Avenue despite dire threats of communistic upheaval did the Senate manage to pass a budget balancing bill which, it is true, leaves much unexplained and unaccounted for but which does in a measure satisfy expectations. The difference between this bill and that sponsored by the House lies chiefly in the fact that income levies are heavier. Needless to remark, the Senate achieved no perfect thing. Its product is as full of flaws as a five dollar tweed suit. Washington has not yet brought itself to face the inevitable music of retrenchment, and its notion that the country will amiably pay income taxes despite continued liberality of government expenditures is a delusion from which the awakening should prove rather distressing. But what would you have? The mountain has been in travail. It is after all not the Senate but the nation which has spoken—spoken through a round hundred

At Last

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minorities, each outfitted with a lobby and each sure that upon its own well-being the stability of the planets depended. Small wonder that the Capitol, sandwiched between the old familiar *Saturday Evening Post* and the seven devils of propaganda, staged a kind of legislative quilting bee! Perhaps there is something in the suggestion, made elsewhere in this issue, that for the sake of national harmony the terms of Senators and Representatives ought to be extended automatically for just another round.

The Bruening Cabinet Falls

IT HAS required no Scotch canniness to predict that if the economic typhoon destroyed still more industrial activity existence would become impossible for the Bruening regime. The German people, in this respect typical of western Europe, decided during 1931 that hope lay in nationalistic defense rather than some form of fantastic alliance with Russian communism; and as the sum-total of their actual prosperity decreases, the strength of their hope almost automatically grows. Here again the ancient saw is applicable: if Hitler had not appeared, it would have been necessary to invent him. Some idea, extreme in both form and content, must be created to release from inner bondage a country so hard pressed as is the Reich. Nevertheless the value of all such movements as Hitlerism—or as Clemenceau-ism in France—lies in the extent to which sound, moderate government can compromise with them. Accordingly the true strength of Dr. Bruening's very remarkable rule lay in the fact that it was able, within limits, both to utilize and to oppose nationalism. The Chancellor himself once stated quite frankly that a genuinely revolutionary proletariat, in the Bolshevist sense, would be fatal; and his aim throughout, and finally in the critical move to break up large Prussian estates, was always to prevent the development of such a proletariat. Since he himself could hardly be seriously accused of wanting affection for the fatherland, he concentrated his attention —though with the caution and even conservatism which are innate in him—on making the suffering masses understand that the Catholic Center Party was on their side.

THAT IS why his downfall is so ghastly and frightening a catastrophe. The truth of the matter is that a Von Hindenburg who could dream of ousting a man like Bruening and turning the government over to a group of nonentities is simply too old—pathetically and tragically too old—for the most difficult of all human tasks, being president of contemporary Germany. It will seem incredible to anyone unfamiliar with the political stupidity of many Germans that the conservatives around the President could have dreamed of splitting the Center Party by sponsoring the candidacy of Colonel von Papen. The Colonel is, to be sure, a very nice man—not the dullard and the criminal of war-time propaganda, but a gentleman of moderate endowments and unselfish ambitions, whose sole real fault (characteristic, no doubt, of his class) is a failure to know what the year 1932 is all about. His elevation to the Chancellorship is exactly comparable to the hypothetical suggestion that Mr. Bainbridge Colby ought to lead the Republican Party. At any rate, after the meteoric and absurd flash of Colonel von Papen across the troubled political skies, Germany will vote again. Then it will probably be Herr Hitler, who in turn will not last long. May God send us, for the saving of western civilization, the gift of beginning to recuperate soon from woes which verily look like the handwriting on the wall!

Admiral Benson

TO THOSE who knew Admiral William Shepherd Benson, U. S. N., retired, and deeply mourned his recent death at his home in Washington in his seventy-seventh year, it will have been some consolation to see that he was appreciated at his true worth. The tributes to him throughout the country have been unanimous in esteeming him a fine officer and a model gentleman. It is all the more encouraging that he should receive these deserved tributes because he was by temperament a modest and quiet man, and we are sometimes led to think that men of this type are apt to be overlooked in our noisy and turbulent times. The fact is of course that human nature is as hungry as ever for truly inspiring leadership. Catholics may take counsel from his practical, active Catholicism. He was perhaps best known in this regard for being the first president of the National Council of Catholic Men, serving five years in this position. The Reverend Dr. John J. Burke, C.S.P., general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, has said of him, "Our country has lost one of its worthiest servants and our Church one of its leading Catholic laymen." Paralleling what might be called his public devotion to his faith, was his private devotion which, for those to whom he was a familiar figure at St. Paul's Church at 15th and V Street in Washington, was characterized by his being a frequent communicant. Fifty-five of his seventy-six years were spent in the service of his country and he was Chief of Naval Operations during the World War. After forty-seven years in active duty in the U. S. Navy, after his retirement in 1919, his integrity and competence were still demanded by his country and he served for eight years as a member of the Shipping Board. *The Washington Post* well said of him, "In private life and in public station Admiral Benson was the soul of honor. His career is an admirable example to all succeeding naval officers." His successor, Admiral Pratt, now Chief of Naval Operations, expressed the feelings of the Service: "He stood like a rock at a time when the Navy needed men. His name will go down to posterity as one of the finest characters that has ever worn the navy cloth," while *The Philadelphia Public Ledger* declared, "Few Americans have had a more distinguished record."

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GLADLY do we lambast the colleges, for their own good. Wholeheartedly do we assent to the proposition that the country has far too many of them. Conscientiously do we support the deplorers of standardization, the advocates of radical experiment in tutoring and organic fusion, the critics who find that our average graduate is not, by many intellectual miles, what he should be. But it is possible to go too far in any direction, even the direction of academic fault-finding. And we submit that some of the inferences from the so-called "Pennsylvania study," with which Albert E. Wiggam makes great play in the current *Cosmopolitan,* are so mistaken that they should be ruled out of any serious inquiry. The demonstration in question rests largely on the fact that there is little discernible difference between many freshmen and many seniors in the forty-nine colleges observed; that hundreds of them have no vocabulary, and cannot meet factual tests of culture; that they can come out of college thinking (to cull from a long list) that a "parapet" is a tropical bird, "spurious" means foamy, "banter" means a small rooster, "culpable" means tender. They can. But this sort of thing is not imputable to college. It begins before they ever get to college, in a home or school atmosphere having neither culture nor the stimulus thereto; and it symptomizes a state of atrophy so complete that, generally speaking, college cannot touch it, and should not be expected to. Indeed, it becomes more and more evident that the colleges, urgent as their problem is, are but the annex of the whole affair. It is the lower schools that must be made over. You cannot teach a student to read in college, nor to write; you cannot "give" him a vocabulary. You can widen, discipline, purify; but if the matriculating freshman does not come in with his own books, his own paragraph structure, his own chosen tokens of communication, it is already too late.

Colleges Are Not to Blame

WE HAVE just glanced through the official report of the "International Week of Religious Ethnology," as the periodic meetings of Catholic research workers in ethnology and comparative religion, originally organized by P. Wilhelm Schmidt, are called. The large volume (published by Paul Geunther, Paris) is an extraordinary compendium of scientific addresses and lucid reflections. This year, when the conferences were held in Luxemburg, particular attention was paid to the history of the primitive family, which subject is of especial importance because it is often misinterpreted in favor of the thesis: the relativity of morals. The papers contributed on marital practice and custom in Europe and among the Bushmen and in various parts of Asia and Africa, form what is veritably a readable treatise on the subject. In addition various general problems, such as religious psychopathology, were discussed in a manner which proved that Catholic teaching is now fully equipped to offer a reasoned and integral point of view. Finally, the congress was able to adduce much encouraging evidence to show that the movement is growing, that new endeavor can be undertaken with assurance of success, and that scholars can coöperate effectively on an international basis. This year there was no speaker to represent either England or the United States—a hiatus which, we trust, can be regarded as an historical accident by the time the next "Week" is held.

Religious Ethnology

NO END of lounge reading is done in summer time by vacationists with time on their hands, and more serious study than most of us realize is undertaken by students following "short courses" in any one of a myriad universities. The ancient myth that books are a winter matter ought, therefore, to be abandoned. It is probably true that fewer are purchased during the hot months, because visits to the shops are less frequent and money seemingly easier to spend for other things. At any rate, every self-respecting publisher knows that he has issued so many volumes between September and June that it would be folly to continue at the same pace. The size and variety of a modern book maker's seasonal catalogue are memorable, indeed. Even so much as a look at one raises the old, old question: "Why do people read?" One has a fancy that the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of, "For information." Man may be defined as an animal with a hope for education. The memory of the average individual is a storehouse equipped with a highly active suction pump. It wants to amass treasure as badly as any beehive; and this natural inclination can be successfully combated only at the price of great effort and self-sacrifice.

The Gallant Reader

CONCERNING the literature of the imagination, which belongs not to the world of real life but to the universe of poetry, there has been considerable difference of opinion. Modern critics have tended to assert that such writing serves no educative purpose. What, they ask, does a rose or a gardenia teach, spurning with contempt the suggestion that one can find "in the meanest flower that grows thoughts that often lie too deep for tears." And yet, when one can concede to the art for art's sake people everything to which they are entitled, the thought suggests itself that Wordsworth may have offered a far sounder definition of and plea for imaginative literature than theirs. In one of his prefaces he declares that—of course the words here used are not his—the poet's business is to make habitable the world offered by the scientist, the thinker and the active man. This means looking upon the imagination as that which teaches how to rearrange existence according to the laws of art, just as the home is based upon an adjustment of space to the individual. But that, after all, is only another way of interpreting education —a way not essentially different from that insisted upon by old Aristotle in his time.

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MAYBE THIS is one of those ideas that other people have been talking about for years, but it was new to us when we heard of it casually in the last week. It is one of those suspiciously simple things which, on the one hand prompts the reflection, "I wonder why nobody thought of it before," and on the other hand arouses the suspicion, "Well, perhaps people have and they have found there is nothing in the idea." One of the Youngstown steel men was the source of our information and he was so sick about the deplorable state of the steel industry that he might have been in a mood for novelties. Anyhow, the idea was that certain railroads suffering as they do from the competition of buses both in the carrying of freight and of passengers, should convert their railways into cement roads. Their railways are of course excellently graded, and properly banked for the curves, and many of them have causeways over the roads that intersect them, so they would permit the operation of real express bus lines, not subject to traffic delays. Ingenious schemes for the cutting out of buses at stations along the way without interfering with the safety and speed of the vehicles in the through express lanes, have been devised. The greater adaptability of buses as carrier units for the varying and unpredictable loads of passenger traffic, is of course obvious, as well as the advantage of trucks that could go directly from factory or farm to the retailers' doors without necessitating the complications and delays and expense of handling merchandise from the factory or farm at the loading railway station and again at the unloading station for its conveyance to its final destination. We wondered what a steel man could see in such a plan, as we thought of discarded rails and locomotives, and he pointed out that reinforced concrete calls for a lot of iron rods and steel mesh, not to speak of mixing machines, and picks and shovels. Besides, buses and trucks are largely made of metal and wear out faster than locomotives. We rather imagine that the plan might ultimately appeal to the restless genius of our country. We seem to be living in an age when the "make-work" principle of economics has lost its old negative connotation, though the replacement of labor complicates it.

New Roads

WHAT TO some minds is identified as the silly sunburn season, is now hard upon us. The fierce debates between the advocates of *peau rouge* and those who prefer to stay in the shade, is not unlike the discussions between the nudists and those who find modesty more convenient and natural. Some bathing suits this season, if we may believe the advertisements, are held together by only the slenderest of threads, and all sorts of innovations are replacing the familiar arm-straps so that the women when they appear in evening dress shall not present variegated patterns of brown and white like some of the lower animals that seek defense in camouflage. Horrible tales of blisterings and pealings will be recounted in country parlors and on hotel verandahs; still the cult of *peau rouge* will continue. It used to be in the bicycle and fringe-topped surrey days, that a family picnic would repair to the shade of an old apple tree in some field not infested with bulls. And after the lunch, such as it might be, papa would put his straw sailor over his face, and still in the shade, would take a nap. Mother would read or talk in low tones with other adult feminine company, while the children would go in wading or play hide-and-seek in the nearby woods. Now the fashion seems to be to conduct everything in the pitiless glare of the sun. Father rises from his nap baked like a potato and on Wednesday, mother's nose begins to peel. The effect of the sun's rays on the human system is said to be healthful, but, like horse-back riding, we believe this is true only when it can be indulged in fairly regularly. We have even heard of a person being delirious after a severe case of sunburning and we have heard many complain of a headache.

Return of the Red Skin

THE BONUS ARMY

MEMORIES of hard, dusty roads north of Toul or Ligny have been revived in dead earnest by groups of Western veterans resolved to make Washington listen to a plea for the bonus in cash. One crowd has literally battled its way across Illinois and eastward. Another, pummeled and decimated by New Orleans police, is in part still carrying on. A third "battalion," headed from California, seems to have taken precautions against running out of rations and into trouble. And when these various hundreds have actually reached the city on the Potomac, they will constitute a very real symbol of that persistent demand which the man in Congress has felt during more than a year. Not they but the silent public they represent—the millions to whom former service in the army is, directly or indirectly, a possible title-deed to needed cash—will knock at the gates of the Treasury.

Watching a movement like this develop is a curious experience. How do they get together, these plain but hardy and quite conservative citizens? Possibly at little Legion posts, possibly in pool-rooms, all herded together by the magic of some untitled leader's suggestion. It would be treating these men most unfairly if one failed to realize that part of their impetus comes from a special kind of patriotic idealism. For most of them to have been a soldier is a title to glory. They feel instinctively that a veteran ought not to be ranked with other unemployed and needy folk—that he is, indeed, an aristocrat whose status the nation cannot with impunity ignore. This feeling, and it alone, motivates the sacrifices and hardships imposed by a long trek across the country, for which the few hundred dollars that the cash bonus would involve could only be poor pay, indeed.

In a measure such a little "movement" has great possibilities. When one bears in mind that the rise of

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Herr Adolf Hitler began in precisely such a way; that he and his fellows were likewise motivated by a feeling for the soldier's superiority, at a time when all Germany was pacifistic—then it becomes clear that this queer idea known as "veteran's pride" can, under proper circumstances, develop into something very important. Of course such history is not likely to be made in the United States, if only because martial feeling is far less deeply rooted here than in European lands. But all discussion of the bonus must reckon with it, as something which months or years of tense emotional experience wrote indelibly on the hearts of many Americans whose young dreams of life had included virtually everything else but war.

So much having been said, it remains to add that Congress has never been more emphatically obligated to ignore pleas of this character than it is now. During week after week, each more wearying and disappointing than the one preceding, Washington worked desperately and in vain to rouse the nation to self-defense against threatening economic doom. It could no longer be a question of trying out assorted palliatives. There was, no doubt, a time when energetic political and financial action on a grand scale might have steadied the arm and the aim of industry by adroit and firm use of moratoriums and credit extension maneuvers. But so far as one can now see, nothing remains to be done but to carry out, honestly and courageously, a curtailment program. This program affects both the citizen and his government. The huge expenditure totals simply must be reduced; and funds need to be found quickly to meet existing and impending deficits. Until a few days ago, when Mr. Hoover dramatically marched to the Senate, Congress failed ignominiously to work out the needed plan. That failure may be traced, first to inability to agree upon remedies adjudged capable of alleviating the depression as a whole, and secondly, to competition for favors coveted by groups small and large.

This congressional disarray promises to remain an unforgettable national scandal and to suggest the desirability of dictatorships. Nevertheless, though it may be that our government as now constituted is powerless to cope with the disastrous social emergency, the situation is first of all a proof that the public mind is not equipped to think and act unitedly. Prosperity—both the fact and the state of mind—trained us all for an exceedingly parochial citizenship. We badly need the phrase and the content of *union sacrée*, as the French term it. Possibly something might be gained by a conceivable decree automatically extending the tenure of office of all members of Congress for a term beyond expiration, thus freeing most representatives and senators from the necessity of thinking in terms of vote-getting, and enabling them to regard the national legislature in the way intended by the fathers. But such decrees are out of the question, no doubt, and our sole hope lies in an aroused public opinion.

Therewith the bonus is put in the right light. Of course the veteran is entitled to special respect and consideration; but he obviously has no valid claim to anything which will impair the national well-being. The plea for a cash bonus is no different in these days of emergency from any other plea, be it for higher duties or relative exemption from taxation. To argue that cash payments to ex-soldiers would put money into circulation means nothing, can mean nothing. We should have to know, first of all, where the money came from, what other expenditures its use prohibited, and for what purposes it was going to be spent. A cross-section of the problem which the ex-soldier confronts in these harassed times would reveal nothing which does not afflict the public as a whole.

Of course something must be done. Now while the most remarkable fact about the United States is the amount of social feeling which the crisis has evoked—that omnipresent readiness to help others to the extent of one's ability—there is no doubt that in the long run the system of voluntary aid fails in many ways. Needed, therefore, is a concept of unemployment insurance designed to meet the emergency as it exists in these United States. One thinks that such insurance is the only just, dependable and practicable way out. All arguments against the dole—and unemployment insurance need not be what the word "dole" implies—assume that jobs can somehow be made available. It is held either that the lay-off is temporary, or that it is voluntary. Such reasoning is no longer sound. The fact that many hundreds of soldiers can make a pilgrimage of the sort we are witnessing shows that consciousness of a state nigh unto despair exists among millions of the poor. This problem of joblessness needs to be faced as a human situation, without interference from shibboleths which no longer have a meaning.

We suggest to the veteran organizations that, aware of the plight visited upon many in their ranks and sure that this plight is characteristic of a large part of the nation's workers, they lead the endeavor to find a practicable answer to the insurance query, and to promote the requisite legislation. Of course it will not be easy to finance a social insurance system. But there are ways and means of providing it with an endowment, and these we ought not to hesitate to try. If, for example, France and other countries have again and again resorted to the capital levy, there is no good reason why our nation, in this hour of need, should continue to believe such a levy unthinkable. We are of the opinion that there are no sacrifices which the American people will refuse to make for the common welfare, once they are convinced that the goal is genuinely national. It is lack of confidence which now hamstrings action—lack of confidence in the integrity of leaders, in other groups, in the drift of legislation. To our mind, advocates of the bonus merely add to that weakening of faith, when they emphasize the needs of veterans at the expense of others. But if they will give their plea a nation-wide scope, there is no denying its practicableness and justice.

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WAGES ARE TOO HIGH

By LYLE W. COOPER

Commenting in the following paper on the familiar assertion that "wages must come down," Professor Cooper argues not that pay scales can be maintained under existing conditions but that industry as constituted is naturally and almost inevitably committed to the principle that cutting wages is good business. This principle has merely been expressed in different ways. During the "boom period," for example, labor's share in the increased earnings lagged far behind. Again, cheap capital may urge employers to supplant "dear" labor with machines. These are fundamental problems.—The Editors.

AMONG American business men the view is now almost unanimous that "wages must come down." At the beginning of the depression some of those concerns which continued to enjoy profits, or which possessed large surplus accumulations from previous years, took the position that wage rates ought to be maintained. Business spokesmen expressing this view were strongly commended by publicists and humanitarians who well understood that even during "prosperity" the vast majority of wage earners in the United States failed to earn an annual income that would provide the average family of five with a hypothetical "American" standard of living. It was also contended that what was socially just would be economically sound. For, to maintain wage disbursements insured the return flow of consumer purchasing power that would bolster volume of sales and profit margins.

All business concerns, however, appeared not to be in a financial position to carry through this policy. Some found that, in spite of their efforts, a substantial drop in sales took place. With inadequate financial reserves and unable to reduce overhead appreciably, it was necessary first to lay off workers and later to reduce wage rates. These actions, by what the economist describes as the "marginal" firms, in time created a business situation which induced the financially stronger to join the wage-cutting procession. This imitative procedure in some instances doubtless was not initially necessary—in the sense that insolvency would have been the penalty for attempting to run counter to the economic tide. But probably "hard-headed" business men are more subject to flurries of panic than is commonly realized. And, in any event, once a considerable proportion of the firms in a given industry had started on a policy of wage-cutting, it was against all business precept and tradition for their better situated competitors to hold for any length of time to a higher wage level.

The opposition to wage-cutting voiced in the early stages of the depression was the expression of a sound instinct: there was implicit the realization that unless effective barriers against these reductions were erected quickly, it would soon be too late. But there seems to be in evidence a degree of puzzlement concerning why the attempt to stop the attack on wage standards did not succeed. Reflection upon this failure is calculated to induce an examination of events preceding the depression. But while this is a correct approach, often the resultant conclusions appear to embody a too restricted basis of explanation. Attention is fastened upon the stock market, or the Federal Reserve Board, or the excesses of instalment selling, or the tariff and reparations, or, in more personal terms, upon the "greed" of the wealthy. Just now it is particularly the fashion to ascribe existing major difficulties to the earlier inflation of credit.

The purpose here is not to deny that any or all of these influences may have contributed to a condition which eventually made wage-cutting impossible to avoid. Rather, *the object is to set forth reasons* for believing that the whole institutional system, including the influences named, is characterized by features that chronically cause wages to be regarded as "too high." Institutionally, our economic structure is a complex of competitive and monopolistic practices based largely upon the ownership or control of private wealth and motivated by an impelling urge to accumulate, by means of investing "surplus," additional private claims to wealth and income. These practices are institutional because law or custom validate them. In fact, law and custom largely derive from them.

For present purposes it is not essential for us to know whether competition or monopoly dominates the institutional complex. What needs to be realized is that they are both important, and that a leading element in the all-pervading complexity is this intermingling of practices, competitive and monopolistic, which, though intermingled, chronically fail to "mix" in beneficial proportions. To this failure, coupled with technological change and other phenomena of "progress"—in themselves a conspicuous institutional feature—can be attributed in the main the much-discussed "lack of balance" which is integral to our economic system.

Illustrations of this lack of balance are easy to discover. For all of the period between the depression of 1920-1921 and the crash of 1929, the institutional arrangements applying to most agricultural products, contrasting with those applying to manufacturing, marketing and banking, resulted in a much lower relative level of prices for the farmer's products than for commodities and services purchased by the farmer. Clearly, here was a case of lack of balance which, in due course, would inevitably make necessary price readjustments and deflation harmful to the continued operation of industry as a whole.

The essentials of the farmers' adverse situation appear to have been duplicated for wage earners. The

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experience of labor between the two major depressions is somewhat obscured because when price relationships were brought to a new "normalcy" after 1922, labor's purchasing power had been enhanced on the average by possibly 25 percent above the prewar level. But while this increase was actual, the gain reveals nothing concerning the adequacy or inadequacy of the prewar wage level. Nor does this gain supply information concerning any inherent lack of balance which may have existed prior to 1914 in the entire economic structure (and must have existed if the institutional explanation here suggested is sound). Further, irrespective of whether the "normalcy" attained by 1923 involved a proper restoration of balance between the purchasing power of wages received by labor and the value of labor's produce, the evidence appears conclusive that thereafter labor's income lagged more and more behind both the physical volume and the money measure of labor's fair share of the expanding output. It may be objected that there is no satisfactory way of causally determining precisely what labor's "fair share" ought to have been. But the conclusion that there was a lag in wages is substantiated by such an examination of the enormous expansion in profits as that of Professor Gordon Hayes and other economists.

In citing the experience of the farmer and that of the wage earner, I may appear to have become sidetracked from the discussion of the mixture of institutional arrangements which are in conflict because some of them function competitively while others embody in varying degree monopoly control. But the diversion was pertinent, since it has prepared the way for a realistic explanation of this lack of balance. In the case of those individuals and groups with little claim on income from property, there existed a condition of much more intense competition than for those who in this vital respect were institutionally well fortified. That is to say, the mass of farmers and the mass of wage earners throughout the "prosperity" period from 1923 to 1929 were highly competitive within their own groups, and therefore typically passive in their bargaining with organized business interests over what they had to sell—their farm products and their labor power.

Doubtless it would be an exaggeration to assert that farmers and wage earners were invariably faced by tight monopolies. But it is substantially correct to maintain that they were generally confronted with organized industries which, because of financial reserves and understandings among "competitors" within the industry concerning prices, wages, etc., wielded decisive monopoly advantages. And in so far as corporations in manufacturing, banking and marketing were infused with monopolistic practices permitting some control over prices to consumers in general, then farmers and wage earners were handicapped at each end of the economic process, initially as sellers and finally as buyers. They therefore suffered reductions in income—or rather, reductions occurred from the amounts obtainable had all groups stood on approximately the same competitive (or monopolistic) basis. A minor amount, of course, of unified bargaining on the part of special groups of farmers and wage earners received expression in coöperatives and trade unions. These groups usually fared better than their unorganized neighbors. But the disparity in strength among the major economic alignments remained decisive.

To this point in the analysis it might appear a case had been made for the conclusion: If only the latent bargaining power of labor could be consolidated, economic balance would be much more probable of attainment. But while one may be convinced of the need for widespread labor organization, it may be questioned whether such a development of itself could remove the basic lack of balance which seems inherent in our economic disorder. If a "strong labor movement" alone could operate to prevent an economic breakdown like the present one, then it may be asked why the western nations of Europe, with their "strong labor movements," are in such serious difficulties. Essentially the same lack of balance pervading our economic structure also pervades theirs. Consequently a conclusion which might appear to be implicit from the previous discussion—that if only the income of the propertyless could have been made to keep pace with the value of their product, no serious lack of balance and hence no depression would have occurred—must be rejected as inadequate, because it begs the question. The institutional system being what it is, there is a strong presumption that no effective way exists *within the system* to insure that general wages can be made to reach the equivalence of labor's product—or, if temporarily so, such equivalence is not adequate to the firm establishment of the needed balance. Both when the production of wealth is expanding and when it is contracting, the influence of the institutional pressures is ultimately thrown on the side of those who control strategically situated forms of property.

Corroborative evidence for this view is supplied by a closer examination of certain significant aspects of the "New Economic Era." At the meeting of the American Economic Association in 1928, Professor Sumner H. Slichter read a paper in which he demonstrated that owners and managers of industry, as a result of the previously mentioned rise in wages following the 1921 depression, decided that they could not "afford" to pay these "high" wages. They could not afford to because a relatively cheaper, and therefore, profit-wise and capitalistically considered, a *more necessary* means of production was available in the form of funds to be obtained at low interest rates. Capital costs were low when compared with labor costs and consequently, in conformity with the well recognized economic principle of substitution, investments in machinery and in other labor-saving devices were made at an accelerated rate.

Professor Slichter did not go into the question of how it came about that capital funds were so cheap—that is, so abundant. If he had done so, he might have been brought to the conclusion that the accumulation of

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capital in no small measure was due to the relatively low wages paid labor during the war years and earlier, with resultant expansion of profits—regarded generally as the chief immediate source of the surplus funds out of which capital investments arise. But such a conclusion would have necessitated explaining why the too-low wages during the period prior to the "normalcy" of 1923 (although among those whose opinion counted it was agreed that wages reached exorbitant levels during the war and after), laid the foundation for their soon being "too high."

The status of the capital fund alone may not be considered a sufficient explanation. But if, instead, emphasis is placed upon the acceleration of technological improvement, it still remains that our institutional apparatus established controlling owners of capital in the position of exploiting for their advantage the increment of (essentially social) technical advance. Their control over the use or abuse of invention, implemented through their control over capital funds, made this exploitation not only possible but inevitable.

To some, it may seem that this attempt at interpretation is strained. Evidently, however, Professor Slichter's view is altogether warranted that the "cheapness" of capital relative to the "dearness" of labor—irrespective of how this condition may have come about—was responsible for the accelerated creation of technological unemployment during the "New Era." Wages had been "too high" and as a result the economic system became so geared that the primary institutional urge to make profits expressed itself in the practice of displacing labor. Labor, once displaced, was in no position to press for higher wages, and those remaining with jobs, knowing of the ease with which they could be replaced from the unemployed, were for the most part little disposed to demand wage increases. One of the ironies of this period between the two depressions is that while employers in numerous industries were thus economizing on labor because it was so much more "expensive" than feasible alternatives, their publicity agents for a price, and most newspaper editors without charge, were extolling the virtues of the "high wage theory" which business found so practical.

We have observed, however, that things were not what they seemed—that the "high wages" advanced little above their 1923 level, while productivity expanded in more rapid ratio and profits developed in even larger volume, thus making it ever more attractive to hire the cheap capital and to dispense with the costly labor. Among other indications, the stock market boom and over eight billion dollars of call loans on the New York Stock Exchange afford further testimony that business was far from starving itself as a result of its amazing generosity to labor during those idyllic years.

A feature of the situation the inner meaning of which may not be well understood, is that the great expansion of investments—in construction activities and foreign loans as well as in technological improvements—all resulted in legal claims to income from the ownership of property. In spite of the ballyhoo concerning employee stock ownership, these legal claims were not shared in any significant degree by labor. On the contrary, to the extent that security claims on income represented a displacement of labor by capital, they in effect signified that labor's previous share of the total national income was being steadily narrowed—the whole process in accord with the institutional rules of the game. Subsequent deflation of prices and earnings has entailed the writing off of some of these "investments," and the end is not yet. But it can hardly be doubted that such business recovery as emerges from this depression will be accompanied by an even more complete concentration in "strong financial hands" of the legal claims to wealth and income. Even among the higher reaches of financial authority there apparently have been disturbed feelings on occasion. How much concerned they are about the ultimate outcome is difficult to know. But if their professed optimistic confidence "in the future of the United States" is to be taken seriously, the "ruling ones" have every reason to be complacent as they observe the institutional process grind on toward making capitalistic concentration and control still more firmly entrenched.

During the depression the inherent tendency for wages to be too high from the point of view of those who control policy, has manifested itself in a way which is familiar. Prior to the depression, we had the attack on labor's share of the national income through the more indirect and subtle method of substitution by capital, accompanied by dilution of skill and displacement—plus the setting up of legal claims beyond labor's reach to vast new accumulations of wealth. Now, we have once again the direct assault on wage rates which "must be deflated." And because what is taking place is more easily understood as being an attack on wage earners' standards, there is an outcry from alarmed labor leaders and from liberals. But the experience of more than a year clearly demonstrates, if anything, that there is at present even less chance of preventing the inevitable functioning of the institutional system from bearing harshly upon the wage earning population than there was during the "New Era."

With the prolongation of the depression the question will be more frequently asked whether a remedy exists within the present institutional framework. In the opinion of controlling finance, when are wages not "too high"? If the problem were simply one of rational conduct, there might be a solution that is not too difficult. For "the rulers of America" possess first-rate minds. But to assume that they are actual rulers is less than a half truth: they are subject to the compulsions of the institutional complex over which they "govern." The functioning of that complex, of monopolistic and competitive forces, under the stimulus of making a profit out of "the main chance," always seems to find wages "too high."

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LANDSCAPE BY VAN GOGH

By ALEX McGAVICK

I HAVE a postcard. Of course that isn't very extraordinary. Postcards exist in droves. Thousands of people have them and send them to thousands of other people. Still, my postcard is, in its way, unique. It has never been sent to anyone. I, in fact, hoard it. I keep it in a little box along with others of its fellows, and at regularly specified intervals, I take it out and regard it with great joy, as if it were a diamond. I practically gloat over it. For, you see, on one side of my postcard there has been printed, in glorious color, a landscape by Van Gogh.

Now if you are the type of layman known as the "conservative critic," the "simple soul," as it were, when it comes to questions of art, you will not appreciate my enthusiasm for the little painting on my card, and you certainly will not appreciate the painting. For it is very modern art. Van Gogh is not so modern after the Cubists, the Fauves, and the Surrealists, but I do believe that a very wild Fauve would have exulted in painting the landscape on my postcard. It looks bad. Things fly around in it. There are great yellow blobs and red and green and blue. There is a road that looks as though it had a terrible jag.

Of course, our conservative critic is displeased by all that. And of course he is going to say of it what he says of all modern art, that it can't possibly be good painting because it is incoherent and ugly; that it cannot be understood. This is where he and I become wildly hostile toward one another. For when it comes to painting I insist on being rather extremely modern. I insist on liking Cézanne and Van Gogh and Matisse and Derain and Dufy and De Segonzac and Braque and Epstein and all the other moderns who have brought to our attention the beauty of unique and particular, even common, things. And I like them precisely because they are wild and incoherent and ugly, and because there is a beauty in those things. After all a gnarled tree has its pleasurable elements.

But of all the moderns I prefer Van Gogh, because he painted things that I know and love, and painted them with such accuracy and brilliance that whenever I look at his pictures those things come out again from my memory to haunt me with all the presence of their day. And yet it was perhaps the very things that Van Gogh painted which so prejudiced the layman, the conservative critic, toward his art.

For alas, the ordinary person has been schooled to believe that good landscape painting is confined to the depiction of a certain atmosphere, and of certain "beautiful" objects. He thinks that only the gentle, the calm, the pleasant, the "pretty" can be aesthetically fine. Corot with his twilit trees, still pools and pleasant nymphs, Monet with his "pretty" objects, his seashores, his violet twilights, were too much for our critic. He insisted that landscape painting was what Corot and Monet had made it, that only the "beautiful" could be good art.

Van Gogh was the obverse of all this. His art was rather shockingly dynamic. His landscapes roared with a tremendous life. Everything glared, trembled, scorched, even hit you. There was motion, wind, heat, rain. For Van Gogh lived in peasant country, exceedingly harsh peasant country, where all there was to paint was the land, land as flat as a dish, and swallowed up in the roll and movement of the great skies overhead. So Van Gogh painted that land, those skies. He painted bellowing winds, blazing suns, black gigantic storms. Of course his landscapes were a bit startling (after all, those things are) and Van Gogh could not expect to be appreciated. After all, our critic was still under the twilit trees. Introducing Van Gogh to him was like introducing the Arizona desert or a Minnesota farmer to an English gentleman. The introduction was not acknowledged.

It is difficult to describe the beauty of a desert, or the peculiar merit of a farmer, in so many words. And it is correspondingly difficult to describe the harsh, vibrant magnificence that lies within so many of Van Gogh's landscapes. One can only indicate possibilities. There is, for example, my postcard. The landscape on that card is a very simple thing. All there is is a cornfield, and a sign of an approaching storm. A cornfield mightn't be expected to be exciting, but it means something like that, and a great deal more than that, to me.

For I know that scene. I remember a day in such a land that was particularly uneasy with itself. Its sun shone with a yellow light that driveled over into dull grey at times, and the whole of that landscape rested in a silence so without sound as to promise none. That place had been emptied of its life. All there was was the farm buildings, and they lay stupidly about in their vacant, parched boards. All there was was the hard, level ground strewn with dry grass, where desultory dust swirls leaped weakly, and died. All there was was a trough where dirty ducks and hens waddled.

Was it any wonder that you wanted to get out of those buildings, out of that hen-yard, into the fields beyond, where there was air and cool and a bit of wind? Why, you strode past those barns, and almost immediately you were wading a field of grass ankle deep, and the skies were over you. And then you had leaped a fence and you had lost yourself in the rise and slope of the vast patchworky sea which makes the farmlands.

So there you were, a mote in that sea. You tramped through fields thick and dry with vegetables. You came into sparse, dry pasturage where only a stagnant puddle, a wan tree, occasional rocks, relieved the desolate-

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ness. You found yourself in great fields of yellow grain that went forever into the sky, and the far edge of that grain was forever your horizon, until at last you had reached the top of the hill, and the whole horizon dropped far, far down and away to the brim of the sky, showing the panorama of the fields before you. And you went on.

And then, after an eternal time, you had vaulted the last fence, into a forgotten cornfield. A bleak, desolate thing that place was, all hemmed in by wild grey sky, and you standing in a harsh raw spot, a sort of road it was, all slashed with clay-red ruts and straggling tufts of vibrant green grass, the border for all that corn. That road wandered around in the field with a vague, trundling motion that only the stupidest of carts could emulate, and as for the corn—well, it lay before you like a skeleton. It was all unevenly cut like a farmer's hair, its edges all ragged with midget cornstalks caked in dry hard mud, but it was of vast extent and it rose to a great bulk, thousands upon thousands of stalks there were, standing stiff and gaunt before you like an army of javelins, and yellow as old age. Every so often that field would raise its huge body and sigh, and then relax into quiet.

The desolation and loneliness of that place was like a sharp, bitter pain. You felt like the last man on the last island—and your island but a great mass of creaking deadness, the road silent and quiet, the whole yellow of the field standing out so stark, so terrifying against the sky. And that sky, more awful still, had become hostile, ominous. Gone was the sun and the grey light. A great gulf of whirling darkness had come up over the land with swift, silent, giant steps, a great blackness overhead marshaling obscure, somber forces, and far, far away, falling infinite beyond the horizon a blueness, so deep, so poignant that it hurt. And under that, all around you, was only the vast uneasy field, the absolutely indifferent road, a deathly stillness.

Until that stillness is broken by a small visitor. For it has come—the wind. Oh, so softly at first it comes, barely raising up little swirls on the shaggy grass, little puffs of red dust from the road, barely nudging along, moving cautiously across the level floor of the field, through the cornstalks, but growing more and more confident, growing greater and greater in volume, until a great sighing and soughing gets to be heard, and the corn begins to sway with a desolate terrifying sound like the howl of a dog. And always overhead that great void of flying darkness—all the blueness has gone now—that great blackness, shifting, reshifting its forces, quietly, silently. . . .

A freshness, a coldness, engulfs the field. The air is cool, as though from the sea. The wind is cold, deliciously cold. It creeps up in great layers of air about your body. You feel cold channels of air eddying around your limbs, in through your clothing, fingering your face, ruffling your hair. The ectasy of the chill runs through your body, you feel as though packed in ice, as though drinking cold wine. Your nostrils lip eagerly the great coolness.

But always all about that darkness growing blacker and blacker, like night's soul, growing more ominous, and always the wind, rising, ever rising in power, until suddenly with a shrieking yell, it blows out flat like a ribbon through the chaotic field. Things begin to fly. Cornstalks rip, surge across the field, drift into chaos. The whole field is retching, tossing wildly, flying every way. Leaves, weeds, dirt hit you in the face. The wind blows piercing, shrill, through your body. Your clothes fold up and hit you, fly out from you. You stand there, chilled, buffeted by the wind, breathless at the wild flinging chaos in front of you. You say, you should go, you should go, there will be a terrific storm, but all you can do is stand there in a great exultation. You want to yell, to cry out at all that beauty, at all that chaos, at all that darkness. Far away in your mind you see great tree masses plunging like horses over pale country roads.

Silently, swiftly the darkness drops down around the field, the great dark sky coming like black fate in over the field, settling down, blotting out, slowly, cruelly, inexorably, the yellow blob of corn, surging wildly, frantically against it. Lightning flickers far out on the horizon. Vague thunder. Silence, and only the wind wrestling with the wild blob of yellow corn, and the great obscurity beyond. Crows suddenly rise up, flicker across the field, fall into the darkness. The wind suddenly drops. There is a strange quiet.

And then you hear the rain. It comes quietly at first, mere timid little thrusting drops, but gradually, gradually, increasing, until it is hitting the field with savage pelting strokes, great heavy piston-like rhythms. The landscape greys. The rain like a great grey locomotive pounds down upon the field. The field roars with rain.

And? Well you, poor idiot, are rather badly soaked. And when, after the storm, you walk across the limp, soggy fields, you are all bedraggled, wet to the skin, mighty uncomfortable; but, strangely enough, a great feeling of gladness seems to have come from somewhere into your heart.

Something like all that is on my postcard. Not the storm, but just before it. There is the wild blob of corn, the raw-red road, the great darkness, the crows. And, of course, when you look at all that, things get to be remembered.

Van Gogh really painted events. He tried to get the magnificence, the splendor, the beauty of the greater moods of nature, on canvas. He could paint rain-soaked fields whose heaviness and soggy wet were like a weight. But more than things like that, he loved the sun, and because of it he painted great dazzling things. He painted desolate wastes that were strewn only with parched grass, stray stones, a stiff tree, but where the clouds in the sky roared with great winds. He painted walls of grain moving under a sky of cobalt blue. He painted a field of yellow grain where the heat was so intense, the glare of the sun so terrific, that the whole

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landscape, the great sheaves of grain, the violet, far-away mountains shimmered and trembled in the gasping air.

And with all that, Van Gogh could come down and recognize the beauty of the common object. He could paint a cabbage patch, an old pair of shoes, a daisy hanging limply in a glass of water. But always, the great dazzling things, always motion, always life, always the things that were wind-swept, sun-stained, soaked with color and light.

But of course (coming back to our postcard) our obnoxious conservative critic couldn't realize that a cornfield and an approaching storm had been brilliantly painted. All he saw was flying things, clashing colors, swift, violent strokes. What he didn't know was that everything had to be painted chaotically because everything was chaotic. After all, to know that an experience has been described, one must know something of the experience, and it is difficult to imagine a conservative critic standing in a cornfield, a storm imminent, and he musing on the aesthetics of the scene. Much less appreciating the beauty of a worn hand, a glass of water, or the dazzling brilliance of the sun, all of which Van Gogh did appreciate. Van Gogh loved the sun so much he put five or six of them in a solitary sky. That was too much for the gentle soul. Everyone *knows* (does not science tell us?) that there is only one sun in the sky, even on hot glary days.

Oh well, there is a great beauty in the things that Van Gogh painted, and when I look at those pictures a great admiration goes out from me to Van Gogh, for having recognized and loved the beauty of those scenes so much that he put that beauty on canvas for the pleasure of others. And well, I have my Van Goghs to look at, and a great deal more of modern art that can be known and loved. As for the conservative critic, when he gets up and says of modern art that it is "nonsensical, and silly, and obscure," I have a tendency to wag the head and say the words in unison with him, but it is not modern art I mean.

WHY ALIENS SEEK CITIZENSHIP

By HAROLD FIELDS

IS IT their affection for the Stars and Stripes that makes aliens wish to become citizens?—or is it—

There was the case of Otto Schulz. He had come to this country eleven years ago and had not yet taken out his citizenship papers. He had a wife and three cute children—and a home, with a heavy mortgage on it. Quite an American he was, he'd tell you, despite the lack of citizenship papers, because didn't he send his children to public school?—and didn't he own his own home?—and didn't he pay taxes?—and didn't he always root for this country? And some day, when he had the time, he'd go before the judge and be made a citizen. Yes sir, he would.

But that day came sooner than he had anticipated. The company for which he was working promulgated the order that on and after a certain date, none but citizens would be kept on their payroll. Length and character of service would have nothing to do with retaining the job. All those who were not citizens by that date were out, and there would be no extenuating circumstances.

Otto went before his boss, stunned and bewildered. He explained that he had always been a good American in spirit as well as in fact. He explained that up to the last year he had not been able to qualify for citizenship because, as part of his work, he had been ordered all over the United States by the company itself, and his residence in any one place was never long enough to qualify him. Three months before he had at last sent in his application but as yet he had not heard from the authorities. The boss was sorry; he explained that the order was compulsory since the firm was working for the state, and one of the laws provided that all contractors on public works must employ citizens only, or else be penalized.

And so Otto rushed about in an effort to hurry along his citizenship. . . .

Now take the story of Tony Spolatio. Come next Thursday and he would be in this country eight years. He too was a good citizen, sure he was a good citizen. Never took out his papers, you know—somehow it was this, or that—but he just didn't.

But the other day he got a letter that his mother was sick—very, very sick. And he hurried to buy a ticket for home—wanted to get there as quickly as possible. The steamship agent asked him if he planned to return and he said, "Yes, sure, why not?" And the agent said, "Then don't forget to take along your citizenship papers." But Tony said he wasn't a citizen. And so, after a few more words of direction, he left for the Naturalization Bureau to get his first papers and thus indicate his intention of becoming an American. They kept him waiting a full month, and then he sailed. "And you can bet you," he said as he left, "when I come back I'll get my second papers so if I have to leave again, I'll travel as an American citizen."

If we look into the case of Jan Pidlowski, we have another reason for citizenship. He wanted to bring his family here (this was before September, 1930, when President Hoover's order went into effect cutting down the numbers of immigrants admitted to this country). He was told that if he were an American citizen, they could come here as non-quota aliens, otherwise they would have to await their numerical order. And that's why *he* became an American citizen.

Or, finally, look into the face of Isidore Shapiro as

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he answers the question, "Why?" His wife is an American girl, his children are American-born, he feels in his every fiber that he too is an American—and he is ashamed to confess he is not. Hence his appeal for citizenship papers. He believes in our government and wants to be a voter in it: he wants to be an American.

Is his case, and his reason, so utterly different from any of the other three? Are the purposes that prompt aliens to become Americans, whether mercenary or economic or material or patriotic, producing different grades of citizens?

These are true stories. They were culled from the records of almost thirty-six hundred applicants for citizenship who were asked why they were seeking naturalization. And these thirty-six hundred held within their ranks all the reasons that probably prompt every alien to take that step, not because the number, thirty-six hundred, is so large—for it isn't—but because it represented over forty nationalities, and persons in almost every cross-section of life.

Of this group, 29 percent frankly stated that they were seeking citizenship either to get or to hold jobs. Patriotic reasons were given by 27 percent. Travel abroad as Americans impelled 19 percent to seek citizenship. There were 12½ percent who pressed their citizenship claims in order to expedite the arrival of their families here. A group totaling 4½ percent were interested in citizenship because their children were born here. 3½ percent needed citizenship in order to qualify for widows' pensions, and 3 percent for old-age pensions. And the remaining numbers were divided among those whose need for citizenship lay in their wish to become an officer of a corporation (a condition imposed in some of our states), to qualify for workmen's compensation, and for sundry other reasons.

Take each of these groups and weigh its claims. The largest—Otto Schulz was a good spokesman for it—is that group that seeks citizenship in order to hold or to get a job, a group that involves almost one-third of those who were asked. Are we to condemn any individual who, without hypocrisy, hastens his citizenship in order to improve his condition? The facts confronting him, as determined in a national survey, are these: as an alien he is ineligible on the average to three out of every five jobs and to four out of every five labor-union memberships; innumerable laws shut the door to occupations and professions that he may be seeking to enter. It can be admitted frankly that his interest in citizenship is not so much in the nature of a spiritual sense of patriotism, as it is in a practical form of national allegiance.

These aliens have become, as our history has shown, truer and stauncher Americans as their citizenship has developed; they have made that citizenship more actual with time and they are the more jealous of it as they own it. It is not so important to know why one seeks to become naturalized as it is to know what one does with that citizenship, after one has it. That is the real value of the motives leading to citizenship.

This group of 29 percent is composed of earnest, self-respecting individuals who came to this country legally, expecting to be given the right to earn a living, only to learn that the opportunity is being denied them just because they are aliens. In New York City alone, where the general impression is that aliens are most warmly welcomed, the alien finds himself denied the right to be employed by some of the shipbuilding concerns and by all the contractors on public works, such as the builders of subways, as well as in startlingly other divergent fields of endeavor. Some of the public utility companies deny him occupation, as well as foremost chain stores. Along the river front he is debarred from qualifying for work because of non-membership in unions that will not admit aliens. Hotels, professions, machine shops, express and transportation companies, milk concerns and others, join in this embargo against alien labor. From scrubwomen to musicians, there are countless instances of citizenship being demanded as a prerequisite for employment. It is, therefore, quite natural and human that that cause should constitute a legitimate reason for seeking naturalization.

The group that sought citizenship for patriotic reasons, and which constituted 27 percent of the numbers studied, can be best described by citing a number of the actual cases themselves. An Austrian applied for his papers because he liked the United States, he had raised six children here, and wanted to become a good citizen. An Italian took the step so he could vote for the next President.

A German gave as his reason the fact that his wife was an American citizen and he wanted, therefore, to be naturalized too. An Irishwoman who has been in the United States forty years, having come over at the age of one, had always been under the impression she was an American citizen and wants definitely to so establish herself. Another Italian said, "I like this country and I do not want to go back to Italy." A Russian's reply was that this was a good country in which to live. And a Pole said, "All my children are citizens and my son is going to college. I am ashamed of myself and so I want to become naturalized."

These are actual and typical answers, similar in tone and in spirit to that of Isidore Shapiro, first cited. Very often citizenship for this group is a matter of comparative standards of living or of economic circumstances—necessarily.

In a smiliar way, 19 percent gave as their reason their desire to travel abroad as American citizens. This desire on their part was born not only of a wish to *become* an American finally, but also to be *known* as an American—and to travel under American protection. Part of the reason, of course, is the desire to avoid the possible reapplication of the provisions of our immigration laws for their readmission as aliens; part of the reason is the assurance that they will not be annoyed by their native government.

Yet this group, like the others, possesses the germ of America and returns to our shores to find itself the

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more appreciative of all that we stand for. In like manner, we can examine the cases of those who seek naturalization in order to qualify for old-age pensions or compensation or widow's pensions, and we will find that the state of mind behind the application contains all of the attributes of good citizenship, and that the step is definitely of value to this country in dollars and cents.

It is necessary to repeat that all these motives are the true and existent reasons why aliens seek citizenship. Thus we at once, and for all time, openly admit an understanding that the motive is generally of a practical and material pattern. Such an understanding will show that patriotism is part of the process—a patriotism that indicates an affection, a respect and a preference for all that this country stands for. The motive to citizenship is not so important as the use to which such citizenship is put.

These then are the facts. While the average alien earnestly wants to become an American citizen, the one step that prompts him to take it is a materialistic one. But despite this fact—or perhaps because of it—the alien develops into a good American and leaves us facing the circumstance that these practical purposes can be held sound and acceptable to any proper and sane philosophy of Americanization.

THE QUINTESSENCE OF CATHOLICISM

By RUSSELL WILBUR

COUNTERPOINT—with an ecclesiastical coda —to a theme taken from "The Education of Henry Adams."

The Theme: from Chapter XIX, "Chaos":

In this year of all years [1870], Adams lost sight of education. Things began smoothly, and London glowed with the pleasant sense of familiarity and dinners. He sniffed with voluptuous delight the coal smoke of Cheapside and reveled in the architecture of Oxford Street. Mayfair never shone so fair to Arthur Pendennis as it did to the returned American. The country never smiled its velvet smile of trained and easy hostess as it did when he was so lucky as to be asked on a country visit. He loved it all—everything —had always loved it! He felt almost attached to the Royal Exchange. He thought he owned the St. James's Club. He patronized the Legation.

The first shock came lightly, as though Nature were playing tricks on her spoiled child, though she had thus far not exerted herself to spoil him. Reeve refused the Gold Conspiracy. Adams had become used to the idea that he was free of the quarterlies, and that his writing would be printed of course; but he was stunned by the reason of refusal. . . .

He had been some weeks in London when he received a telegram from his brother-in-law at the Bagni di Lucca telling him that his sister had been thrown from a cab and injured, and that he had better come on. He started that night, and reached the Bagni di Lucca on the second day. Tetanus had already set in.

The last lesson—the sum and term of education—began then. He had passed through thirty years of rather varied experience without having once felt the shell of custom broken. He had never seen Nature; only her surface—the sugar-coating that she shows to youth. Flung suddenly in his face, with the harsh brutality of chance, the terror of the blow stayed by him thenceforth for life, until repetition made it more than the will could struggle with; more than he could call on himself to bear. He found his sister, a woman of forty, as gay and brilliant in the terrors of lockjaw as she had been in the careless fun of 1859, lying in bed in consequence of a miserable cab-accident that had bruised her foot. Hour by hour the muscles grew rigid, while the mind remained bright, until, after ten days of fiendish torture, she died in convulsions.

One had heard and read a great deal about death, and even seen a little of it, and knew by heart the thousand commonplaces of religion and poetry which seemed to deaden one's sense and veil the horror. Society being immortal, could put on immortality at will. Adams being mortal, felt only the mortality. Death took features altogether new to him, in these rich and sensuous surroundings. Nature enjoyed it, played with it, the horror added to her charm, she liked to torture, and smothered her victim with caresses. Never had one seen her so winning. The hot Italian summer brooded outside, over the market-place and the picturesque peasants, and in the singular color of the Tuscan atmospheres, the hills and vineyards of the Apennines seemed bursting with midsummer blood. The sick-room itself glowed with the Italian joy of life; friends filled it; no harsh northern lights pierced the soft shadows; even the dying woman shared the sense of the Italian summer, the soft, velvet air, the humor, the courage, the sensual fulness of Nature and man. She faced death, as women mostly do, bravely and even gaily, racked slowly to unconsciousness, but yielding only to violence, as a soldier sabred in battle. For many thousands of years, on these hills and plains, Nature had gone on sabring men and women with the same air of sensual pleasure.

Impressions like these are not reasoned or catalogued in the mind; they are felt as part of violent emotion; and the mind that feels them is a different one from that which reasons; it is thought of a different power and a different person. The first serious consciousness of Nature's gesture—her attitude toward life—took form then as a phantasm, a nightmare, an insanity of

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force. For the first time, the stage scenery of the senses collapsed; the human mind felt itself stripped naked, vibrating in a void of shapeless energies, with resistless mass, colliding, crushing, wasting and destroying what these same energies had created and labored from eternity to perfect. Society became fantastic, a vision of pantomime with a mechanical motion; and its so-called thought merged in the mere sense of life, and pleasure in the sense. The usual anodynes of social medicine became evident artifice. Stoicism was perhaps the best; religion was the most human; but the idea that any personal deity could find pleasure or profit in torturing a poor woman, by accident, with a fiendish cruelty known to man only in perverted and insane temperaments, could not be held for a moment. For pure blasphemy, it made pure atheism a comfort. God might be, as the Church said, a Substance, but He could not conceivably be a Person.

With nerves strained for the first time beyond their power of tension, he slowly traveled northward with his friends, and stopped for a few days at Ouchy to recover his balance in a new world; for the fantastic mystery of coincidences had made the world, which he thought real, mimic and reproduce the distorted nightmare of his personal horror. He did not yet know it, and he was twenty years in finding it out; but he had need of all the beauty of the lake below and of the Alps above, to restore the finite to its place. For the first time in his life, Mont Blanc for a moment looked to him what it was—a chaos of anarchic and purposeless forces—and he needed days of repose to see it clothe itself again with the illusions of his senses, the white purity of its snows, the splendor of its light and the infinity of its heavenly peace. Nature was kind; Lake Geneva was beautiful beyond itself, and the Alps put on charms real as terrors; but man became chaotic, and before the illusions of Nature were wholly restored, the illusions of Europe suddenly vanished, leaving a new world to be learned.

On July 4, all Europe had been in peace; on July 14, Europe was in full chaos of war.

The Counterpoint:

Reality—if one has the courage to scrutinize it without rose-colored glasses and to smell it without previously sprinkling it with rosewater—is grim and terrible.

"Our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

"It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God"; and we fell into His hands when we were born or rather when we were first conceived in the womb.

Reality is often grim and terrible even on its surface; it is almost always grim and terrible underneath the surface and until one penetrates to its innermost core. At its innermost core Reality is infinitely tender, infinitely strong to sustain, to console, even permanently to delight and enrapture the heart of man.

Only heroism can penetrate to the innermost core of Reality—only heroism fused with humility.

(The humility that is needed is more than merely personal humility. Personal humility, humility with reference to one's single self, is of course indispensable. But much more indispensable, if such a self-contradictory expression may be allowed, is *human* humility—humility, that is, with reference to the human species, to man's place in the universe, to the limited social and historical possibilities of human life. *Creatureliness,* in short; creatureliness with a full recognition of the general corruption of human nature, a corruption which consists simply in the incurable inordinateness of human desires. Man is the only one of the biological primates irremediably afflicted with megalomania!)

Life, then, is a call to heroism and humility; in them lie its only possibility of peace, its only chance of joy.

The overwhelming majority of mankind is incapable of active, aggressive, audacious heroism. But all who will can by God's grace learn at least to suffer heroically; to endure heroically the ills that press upon them from without and the still more terrible restlessness of their own hearts—the wild, indeterminate, infinite appetite for happiness that torments each human soul.

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord"—Thou hast made us for Thyself, O jealous, terrible, fiery, insatiable Reality as a Whole—"and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

The secret of a happy life: to learn to suffer in patience, in humility and in confidence; in confidence that suffering has a meaning and a purpose, not perhaps the only meaning and purpose but the supreme meaning and purpose of human life.

Those who learn by God's grace thus to suffer are God's "elect"—those who learn to make the right response to life in the deepest things of life. And as they learn thus to suffer they discover within the depths of their own souls a Mysterious Presence, One Who comes to suffer in them, with them and for them, the Eternal Christ, the Comrade Perfect, the joy-bringing Spouse and Bridegroom of the soul. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace.

All this the Roman Catholic Church, feebly and clumsily enough ("We have this treasure in earthen vessels") but with unrivaled effectiveness as compared with all other human organizations and institutions, gets over into the hearts, minds, lives of men—especially of the masses of men as far as they are capable of taking it in, which is little enough. But how much they need that little!

This is her message, her task, her misssion—a task not to be performed without the Church's becoming overmuch "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in."

It is true, of course, that by virtue of performing this very task the Church, incidentally as it were and yet inevitably, acts as a mighty balance-wheel to the otherwise more or less crazy cultural and social machinery of human life.

But that is another and a lesser story.

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TWO CATALAN POETS

By M. MANENT

I. Joseph Carner's Latest Book

JOSEPH M. CAPDEVILA, in his critical essay, has referred with admirable penetration to the world of Carnerian beauty, comparing it to a palace surrounded by gardens. This world, in "El cor quiet" (The Quiet Heart), the latest book of the illustrious poet, offers us extremely delicate new aspects; it seems to be that

> ". . . light kingdom
> Where starlight and dew,
> Music and snow are born."

It might be compared to the Socratic paradise itself, where "the mountains and rocks have a sweetness, a transparency and coloring more agreeable than ours." It is a winged and fugitive vision, like Mr. Carner's verse itself.

Sometimes this vision reaches a magnificent concentration of its elements, but its density is not at all heavy but marvelously graceful:

> "Let us see if tonight you will approach
> Above the clash and din of the spears of rain, alone or
> With a single star, receiving the scent from
> My convulsed lilac, April moon, peeping out
> Through the storm from a corner of the sky."

The poetry of Joseph Carner gives little by little a sensation of the infinite. You believed you saw the limits of it, but each new book reveals a new charm, hitherto unguessed perspectives.

The poet "always imposes his selection on the outside world," very rightly observes Mr. Capdevila; but in this book we find poems in which the selection does not seem so rigorous as in other books; "La paraula en el vent" (The Word on the Wind), for instance. The great diversity of tones which is characteristic of "The Quiet Heart" might reveal perhaps a triple attitude toward life or the external world: the poet either describes them as they are, imperfections and all—and his humor in this case, gilds all their sordid aspects; or his imagination makes a subtle choice of the reality according to a criterion of beauty; or his fancy creates a symbolic world, a trifle sleepy (as happens in the sonnet that closes the book). Often the humor, the realism and the imaginative vision are wisely blended and produce one of the most original and typical notes of Carnerian poetry. The poem "Casa que fou de pescadors" (The House That Once Was a Fisherman's), is an example of this. There is the poetical vision of the house near the sea:

> "A house with a white curtain blown out by the wind
> And then hidden between the apple-green shutters.
> At the bottom of my street is the merry sea
> And if the white muslin hides it from me
> Still its spray reaches me with briny scent."

But the prestige of its former lot is marred by the people who now inhabit it:

> "Fate has made thee the lodging place
> Of retired shopkeeping people:
> I can hear them from here
> Amusing themselves with a musical-box
> And with a sewing-machine."

The humor with which this rather sordid reality is described seems, in a certain way, to redeem it; it is like a gracious smile illuminating an imperfect visage and beautifying it. In the humor itself there is a certain compensation for the beauty lacking in the reality evoked. But the poet needs yet another compensation; and fancy comes to offer it to him:

> "But, my mind willingly wandering,
> I, from the courtyard, see on the gleaming white wall
> Fishnets and oars and a piece of ship's rigging
> Saved from some wreck, planted there as a thank-offering,
> And dripping wet, freshly caught fish
> (The exquisite colors of unfamiliar varieties
> Shimmering in every direction),
> And, in an old pot, seven sea-lilies."

The different facets of the vision blend delicately and form a perfect whole. Comparing this vision with earlier ones of the poet, it is, as it were, more transigent lyrism, in which beauty dwells with aspects of the reality that formerly would have been excluded from his verses. An amiable current links reality with fancy; you feel that the poet, when speaking to you about banal realities, does not lose much by it: perhaps because his humor redeems them, or because imaginative reaction at once insinuates itself.

This intimate happiness, the origin of his humor, in which ugliness itself is half dissipated or dissembled, explains the marvelous possibilities of the poetry of Joseph Carner, and permits him to approach nearer to life, at times transcending, in its graciously planing flight, the habitual limits of his world of beauty.

II. "Jubilee," by Joseph M. Lòpez-Picó

Everyone has remarked the connection which exists between "Jubileu" (Jubilee) and the last book by Mr. Lòpez-Picó, "Invocació secular" (Secular Invocation). In the first he sang Adam; in this other he sings Francis, the new Adam of Assisi. Both books are the testimony of the noble effort of a tormented and complex soul to sing about the human attitude and the vision of the world before the coming of any inquietude, or having overcome all inquietude: in the primary freshness of Creation, or in the ardent renovation of Franciscanism.

The first song of the poem has the incoherence, the agitation, the restlessness, of a nightmare. It gives us a vivid image, full of anguish, of the soul without God, groping and despairing:

> "The mute shadows carried away by the soft wind,
> Red smoke, white smoke, in delirium.
> The silence of horizons of dead fever,
> The shivering bareness of the roads."

But toward the end, the song begins to be illuminated. The evocation of that abyss of darkness is closed by a smiling and joyous word, suggestive of abysses of clarity. The song to Italy, that comes after, is a richly sculptured vision, in which history and landscape harmonize in beautifully colored perspectives. It is a typical example of the enumerative syntheticism of this poet, in which the abstract conception and the concrete vision often accompany and strengthen each other:

> "Bitter serenity of the landscape,
> Shy fertility: rock and green."

But the song to Saint Francis which closes the book is still fuller of light. From the interior chaos of the first song, we had passed to a world of beautiful and harmonious, but exterior forms; now, at last, the light shines on the world, but also within the soul:

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"Francis after Adam, he who puts
Adjectives to the nouns Adam uttered,
And the world turns lovingly to everything
Where the praise of love smiles."

The joyous mastery of Saint Francis, his love of charity in contrast with the thirst for merely intellectual light which torments the modern soul, are sung in the last song of the book in verses of as much tenderness as the poetical idiosyncrasy of Mr. Lòpez-Picó permits. The thoughts of the author are not always transfigured in poetry; he does not always know how to break through the conceptual outer bark (and in this he reminds us of Ausias March). However, we know that when he incarnates them in clear and vivid images, he can reach very beautiful realization. Thus, in that unforgettable stanza of "Secular Invocation":

"Nuptial nights: the dawn is breaking
Like the herb that has flowered in dew.
Hail! Adam, beholding naked Eve
As if he saw the morning star vanishing."

Those are, it is true, what Mr. Paul Valéry would call "exceptional marvels." But although the verses of Mr. Lòpez-Picó are not always interesting as poetry, they are invariably interesting as thoughts. The very personal diction of this poet (and few have such an unconfoundable style as he has) seems partly to strip the words of their habitual musical qualities. Words like "dew," "dawn," "morn," used poetically by Mr. Carner and by Mr. Lòpez-Picó, represent without any doubt, different nuances and values. In the poetry of the latter, the words have an essential gravity, a rigid and decided outline, above all when they are framed within the assurance of the hendecasyllable. Even those words of more sonorous flight, of a softer and finer ring, which may be inserted in agile rhythm and enrich it by their musical presence, in Mr. Lòpez-Picó's verses seem to lose this fluidity, this intimate principle of dissolution. Each word is detached in its separate and individual sonority, as if it was sorry to disappear in the metrical succession. They are naked words—this epithet is dear to the poet—rigid, full of acute facets.

One can rarely say, as Mr. Suarès said when commenting on Mallarmé's work, that Mr. Lòpez-Picó's verses are "ideas which have found their music." His thoughts do not dissolve nor do they much transform themselves musically, they do not become brilliant and mobile like the sky in a drop of dew: they are solid and many-faced like a diamond. This poetry evokes rather the austere beauty of a sentence engraved on marble than the free impulse of a song. Mr. Lòpez-Picó's verses, to use his own words, have the gravity and the austerity of a "remembrance confided to stone." If there is any music in them it is grave music, like the architectural music of a Roman portico.

But it is a sign of richness for Catalan literature to possess, besides poetry which can harmonize beautifully with song, this poetry that can harmonize worthily with marble.

Self-portrait

The strident cicada music
Of a street piano
On an arid street,
Between cliffs of cellular concrete,
Rises on a summer day.
A dark mustachioed man
Turns the crank that makes the music play.

F. T.

COMMUNICATIONS

RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editor: By presenting her case from a different angle, I beg leave to defend the Catholic hospital graduate against the criticism of your correspondents writing under "Religion in the Curriculum," in THE COMMONWEAL for March 16 and 30.

Like the grain of mustard seed, the seed of religion which has grown to a thing of vigor in an individual, has had a humble beginning. It is not grown from late planting, nor is it grafted from a curricular species. The living root, kept from tampering fingers, is nourished in secrecy and silence, and when it has acquired the vitality which makes it resist what is alien to its nature, it comes forth—a spectacle to angels and to men—from God's own cultivator, she who eminently deserves the words of Coleridge: "A mother . . . the holiest thing alive." The school can preserve it—if, indeed, it does not destroy it.

All religion is inspired. Whether it be personal sanctity, or an intelligent knowledge of dogma, practice and ethics, it is inspired by an ideal. Of all the duties of religious government there is none that demands more consideration and discretion than putting the right persons in the right places in Catholic hospitals, and the wrong persons where they can do the least harm to the student, because of her unique position for discernment of genuine religion. It is quite an error to imagine that there is no religious teaching in the extra-curricular training. Religion in the curriculum is secondary religious education in the training of a nurse. There is a very complete system of thinking, with regard to religious teachers and their motives, in this particular field of Catholic education. You cannot be continually teaching ethics cut off from practice by exclusions, without encouraging the power of making the exclusions.

Can it be explained why the school spirit in Catholic hospitals is not one of greater reverence for the religious institute? I beg leave to quote from "Ethics on Solid Ground," by Russel Wilbur: (THE COMMONWEAL, January 27, 1932):

"Probably many persons would achieve sanctity who now fail if they were as humble with reference to the groups to which they belong as they are humble to their merely singular selves. Who that is familiar with religious has not known many . . . who had achieved an almost supernal individual humility; vitiated and poisoned, however, by an almost diabolical group pride; thin-lipped, sanctimonious, mincing, but underneath venomous and deadly when the glories, the merits, the interests of other religious institutes than his or her own are involved?"

The truth of this is found in the fact that never is it known that a religious has considered her community, made up of individuals as it is, unworthy of certain other individuals of greater sanctity, who find no inspiration in so-called religious life. If the faithful are keen, though usually silent, judges of what becomes religious, it is because they carry the true type of sanctity in their faith. Since the successful completion of the Catholic hospital training course is considered equal to the religious novitiate, why are recruits from the one to the other so exceedingly rare? Do we sense any alarm that many, too many, Catholic hospital graduates have applications in the Navy—not by choice, but of economic necessity?

Of the two great commandments, it is easy to live love for God in our lives. The real test of religion is love for the neighbor. The great barrier against reciprocity in the thing we are considering is "the interest" of the religious institutes in Catholic hospitals; to which the graduate is induced and expected to pay tribute in post-graduate work to unreasonable lengths; as

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loyalty to her school, or experience for herself, or any other guise that the institute may put upon it, other than the light of the Divine command that forbids defrauding labor of its wage. However presented for the sake of expediency, a spade is always a spade. There is no counterpoise of gratitude to the profession. The select of an outgoing class are retained with anticipation of recruits to the institute. Others go out to the far reaches of the earth with the memory of a rigorous term spent as a cog in a machinery well oiled with their toil and weariness, and for which they never feel compensated. To many religion is a disillusionment, and eventually, a relic of the past.

Because humility is accused by pride of degrading man from his worth, religious institutes and individuals often allow dignity to subordinate it, believing that they enhance the glory of religion. Like a good fire, which everything combustible will feed, a good foundation of humility will increase its power by every virtue it receives. It will discover where the true worth of an institution lies, and increase the power of inspiration in groups who dwell together "in His Name."

Young minds are capable of great thoughts. They think and observe considerably more than we give them credit for. The Catholic hospital graduate who has imbibed a love for religion as lived in "the cloth" at her side will not long lack the knowledge of its doctrines, practice and ethics; which interest in a vital influence will acquire with an ever-increasing urge. The higher elements of religion in her field are not found in a curriculum, but in the teacher who is ever on the spot.

MARTINUS IMPORTUNUS.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

Louisville, Ky.

TO the Editor: If I may, I should like to make a few observations on Kilian J. Hennrich's article on "Child Psychology," which appeared in the April 6 issue of THE COMMONWEAL.

As the author states, the source of knowledge must come from outside the child, for the very fact of being under observation would be felt by the child and make response to the various stimuli used as experiments, artificial and untrue, where as the experience of well-balanced adults, with unprejudiced consideration of the effects produced on themselves by these same stimuli, gives a true idea of a normal effect on a normal subject.

Psychology, considered as an abstract study of the possibilities of action and reaction in the human spirit, is a wonderful field of research, made wider almost to the extent of being illimitable by reason of the fact that what is true of a thousand individuals may not be general and indeed, that what is true of one individual at one time, need not be true of that same individual on another occasion, even under similar conditions.

So true is it that true psychology presupposes, also as a *sine qua non,* true religion, or rather that it is an evidence of the truth of religion, it would seem it is but a proof of the doctrine of free will. Basing deductions on the results of heredity, surroundings and events on the lives of those whom the Church has raised to the altar, there is but one conclusion to be drawn —that heredity, surroundings and events are either obstacles or stepping-stones to character-building and growth in holiness, depending upon their use. Aloysius was certainly the subject of neither heredity nor surroundings when, in spite of the determined opposition of his worldly father, he cast aside the trappings of nobility and perseveringly trod the narrow road that made him fit to become the patron of youth. For one Saint Louis with a saintly mother preferring to see him dead rather than guilty of one wrong, there have been numerous others among that holy company who met with a storm of opposition in their endeavor to tread in the footsteps of the Crucified.

To the young mother who would base her handling of her little ones, or to one who would seek to train the poor little waif from the gutter, on the study of psychology, it might seem that the problem was simply incomprehensible and impossible, and that she should just eliminate herself.

We are told that the Little Flower, without leaving her convent, saved more souls than Saint Francis Xavier in all his apostolic labors. Applying that to ourselves, if we would save the little flock entrusted to us, whether it be our own darlings or a group of waifs picked up from the gutter, in this conflict which is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers," the more we can be like her, the better we can accomplish that task. And it seems to me that, aside from the fact of getting nearer to God and striving for our own perfection, the thing that operates especially to this end, is the absolute absence of self-seeking or gratification in the success to be attained, which makes God more inclined to help us. In those in charge of children who earnestly strive to do the task before them, there is apt to be a feeling of responsibility to someone in authority over themselves, or to their neighbors and friends' opinions, or even to God, that causes an irritation or displeasure or antagonism toward a culprit, which makes a correction repulsive, whereas given under other conditions, it would be productive of beneficial results.

One thing is surely true—the God who has promised to forgive our sins though they be as scarlet, will certainly not refuse absolutely to permit the child of that sinner to approach Him, provided he is willing to take up his cross and follow Him.

We cannot and would not all be enclosed nuns, and God Himself would not have us be, but we can and should realize more than we do that "there are more things wrought by prayer than this world dreams of"; and realizing it, have recourse to the intercession of those whom God has placed on the mountain to pray for their brethren fighting in the valley below. And among those things that we should ask them to obtain for us, is the gift of "discernment of spirits" that will help us to use the right remedy at the right time, with those under our care.

ANASTASIA M. LAWLER.

RACIAL GROUP HISTORY

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: I am indebted to Mr. Richard J. Purcell both for his announcement of the probable program of Father Thorning's next book and for his assurance that the "touch of the usual disparagement of the Maryland experiment" that I feared does not exist in fact.

Evidently Mr. Purcell has been spared my own experience in that regard, which if he were aware of it would, I am sure, make him very lenient with my touchiness on the subject.

I confess freely and frankly that I am bored to impatience with the new "racial group" writing of American history. I believe that the new basis of citizenship it evidences is highly detrimental to America and Catholicism. I believe that so firmly that I fear no amount of the abuse I get in my daily mail from Catholics who are totally unknown to me, will do anything but convince me more definitely that it is a danger.

I welcome the hope Mr. Purcell holds out of a critical and historically accurate survey of the Catholic experiment in Maryland. Somewhere in it, I trust, will be included, a study of the

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phenomenon which I hold to be the fundamental flaw in our whole American system: the founding of free commonwealths on unfree labor.

In my opinion that flaw has gone far to vitiate our whole conception of citizenship. It has twisted our understanding of democracy; it has warped our study of our own history; it accounts equally for "nativist" arrogance and for our present-day attitude toward any Catholic handicapped by not possessing a "Catholic name."

Dr. Maurice K. Sheehy has begun an admirable survey of some of the points to be covered in such a study in his memorandum on "National Attitudes among Children" (i.e., other than American national attitudes among American children), and he enumerates twenty-two "national" and "racial" attitudes among them.

I have no doubt that I have annoyed various people by advancing my opinion that all this is a positive peril to America and to Catholicism. Now that scholars are beginning to look at it and agree that it is so and to understand that it can even affect true scholarship, I am delighted to withdraw permanently from the subject.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

BACK TO THE LAND

Staunton, Va.

TO the Editor: I am in receipt of a letter from your circulation manager, in which attention is called to the back-to-the-land movement and the series of articles running in THE COMMONWEAL bearing upon the subject, and enclosing a card for subscription purposes.

While I have never been among your subscribers, THE COMMONWEAL is not unknown to me; in fact, I have a copy before me, that of November 19, 1930, in which number "The Unemployment Puzzle" is covered by G. Hirschfeld—a puzzle, however, that not only antedates Mr. Hirschfeld's article, but, unhappily, one that is still with us in far greater degree; so much so, in fact, that even many young men cannot get a job, to say nothing of the multitude beyond the so-called age limit, but who are still in health and fully capable of rendering efficient service, thereby being able to provide for their dependants.

That the cities and other industrial centers are full of such, with mothers and children paying the heavy penalty through broken health, and, in some cases, death from starvation, is an appalling truth that no honest person familiar with the subject will deny. And, to my mind, these facts are largely responsible for the back-to-the land movement—a very good thing, no doubt, provided that ways and means can be found to make rural activities possible through adequate finance; also provided that those who settle in the country will supplement financial help by real and interested work. Otherwise, many of those who hit the back track, likewise those who are not familiar with rural life and activities, cannot possibly succeed in improving their condition. In other words, there are many in the rural districts today who not only do not have enough cash to pay taxes and other charges, but who, were it not that they have been able to raise certain food products—in many and many a case through borrowed funds for seed and fertilizer that they have not yet been able to repay in full—would now be practically starving.

As one, however, who has seen both sides—city versus rural life—I am much impressed by the advantages offered by the latter, especially in the wholesome life in the great out-of-doors for children. Toward that end, I built a modern home (1917) about four miles west of Staunton, Virginia, in the Valley of the Shenandoah. Since June, 1930, when I fell a victim of the business stagnation in my regular field of sales endeavor—that of grain and grain products—I have been busily engaged in rural pursuits—dairying in a small way, poultry-raising, truck gardening and fruit-growing, also some general crop-raising for stock and poultry feeds.

But, aside from raising about 80 percent of our table supplies and grain and forage crops for stock and poultry—due to the prolonged drought of 1930, and the very low prices prevailing in 1931 for practically all country products, I have been able to accomplish but little; that is to say:

While an average cash income of $150 per month would not only take care of interest, taxes, insurance and other fixed charges, but would provide the cash requirements for a family of six, including the education of four children, I have not been able to produce enough of the all-needful to take care of even 50 percent of these cash demands, which, however, in order to live in a wholesome manner and pay as one goes, represent necessities only. No, we do not have a radio, nor a car, however firmly certain speakers of a few years ago promised through the air that, under the continuation of a certain type of prosperity, there would at least be one of the former in every American home.

Therefore, I would say, if those already engaged in rural activities cannot make good without financial help that will enable them to operate along economic lines, thereby reducing overhead through increased production of diversified crops and rural specialties, also through better marketing facilities, what will be the fate of those who will make up the back-to-the-land movement, especially those who know nothing of rural life and its activities, and who have no cash?

However, I am much interested in rural life, likewise in any movement that will really aid those who are suffering the most from the business stagnation, agriculturally, industrially, commercially, professionally.

This, is not intended as a hard luck story, but merely as a statement of facts that I have noted over a large area. At the same time, I am confident that, with full coöperation all around, the back-to-the-land movement will prove of great benefit to those who avail themselves of it.

F. DE SALES DUNDAS.

Augusta, Ga.

TO the Editor: Your very instructive articles on farm life bring back to one the wisdom of the elder Cato (eclogues "De Re Rustica"):

"The pursuits of commerce would be as admirable as they are profitable if they were not subject to so great risks: and so, likewise, of banking—if it were always honestly conducted. For our ancestors considered (and so ordained in their laws) that, while the thief should be cast in double damages, the usurer should make four-fold restitution. From this we may judge how much less desirable a citizen they esteemed the banker than the thief. (!) When they sought to commend an honest man, they termed him good husbandman, good farmer.

"Personally, I think highly of a man actively and diligently engaged in business, who seeks thereby to make his fortune. Yet, as I have said, his career is full of risks and pitfalls. It is from the tillers of the soil that spring the best citizens, the staunchest soldiers; theirs are the enduring rewards that are the most grateful and least envied. Farmers are least of all men given to vice."

LAWRENCE MAYNARD GRAY.

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STAGE AND SCREEN

By R. DANA SKINNER

Bridal Wise

THIS PLAY combines some distinctly spontaneous comedy with the elements of a bed-room farce and an indirect preachment against some practical aspects of divorce. In general outline, it is the story of a brat of a boy who, through brattishness and persistency, succeeds in reconciling his father and mother after they have been divorced for sundry and silly reasons. The authors, Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich, have done an exceedingly good job in the portrait of this boy. Twain or Tarkington could hardly have done better.

Joyce Burroughs (Madge Kennedy) and Alan Burroughs (James Rennie) are living on a Maryland estate, Alan having retired early from business to devote himself to the ideals of the country gentleman, meaning chiefly horses. Joyce cares nothing for horses nor hounds nor for the atmosphere of hunt clubs and pink coats. But Alan, in spite of an innate inability to stay long on a horse's back, is determined to learn his part. In the process, he meets a supposedly congenial soul in one Babe Harrington (Blyth Daly) who eats, lives and sleeps horses. The Burroughs quarrel over the horsey damsel and decide to divorce each other. But at this point, the brat, Peter Burroughs (Jackie Kelk) begins to take a hand in their destinies. He is so completely odious that neither Babe Harrington, who plans to marry Alan, nor Gidney Weems, who plans to marry Joyce, wants to have anything to do with him. This proves a little too much for the devoted parents, particularly as they lack the courage to tell Peter what has happened and can not, therefore, explain the situation to him.

Peter eats himself sick. He makes insulting remarks and gestures at the interlopers. He gets expelled from school just as his parents are about to start on their fresh honeymoons and so forces them to come together in common counsel. His tactics result in mixing the wrong couples in the wrong bed rooms while there is still chance for mutual annulments all round. In the end, he accomplishes by innocent blackmail and sheer stubbornness all the desired ends. The new marriages are completely disrupted and the old one reëstablished, with horses and pink coats a thing of the disgusting past.

The story, of course, being told in the modern manner, entirely ignores any question of right or wrong. The problem resolves itself entirely into a matter of practical human affections and common sense settlement. The bed room farce elements, while blatantly innocent, are a tribute paid to the supposed tastes of summer theatre-goers. But in so far as a comedy of this type can do so, Bridal Wise manages to make out a case against the most selfish stupidity and the ignoring of children's rights in marriage.

Madge Kennedy is her ever-charming self as Joyce, James Rennie is properly masculine and stupid as Alan, and Blyth Daly makes the horsey Babe Harrington quite as aggressively unromantic as she is supposed to be. But it is Jackie Kelk as Peter who furnishes the feast of the evening, ably assisted by the diminutive Raymond Bishop as little colored Sam, a companion in his brattishness. There has never been quite such a stage child as Peter. If he could only have been incorporated into a play of better substance and clearer point, we should have been furnished with an occasion of untrammeled delight of which the humor would have borne reflection the morning-after.

As You Desire Me

GRETA GARBO plays the screen heroine in this version of Pirandello's play, and plays it to the hilt. It will be recalled that in the original stage production in this country, Judith Anderson played the part of the girl who is supposed to be the lost wife of the Italian officer. The whole feeling of the part is altered by Miss Garbo, but not to its disadvantage.

Hollywood, of course, has made the usual drastic alterations in the substance and idea of the play, including a complete change of the ending. Pirandello, who spends most of his time trying to disprove the existence of objective truth, would probably fail utterly to recognize his handiwork. In the original play, Maria, a cabaret singer in Budapest, is recognized by an artist who once painted her portrait as the wife of Bruno, an Italian officer. Maria had disappeared ten years before when Bruno's estate was raided by the Austrians. But Pirandello purposely leaves doubt in the mind of the audience as to the real identity of the cabaret singer. She is a girl who has quite lost her memory of all events preceding the war. She remembers vaguely and with horror an "invasion." But where it was, or who she was at the time, she does not know. She returns with the artist to Bruno—and recognizes nothing. She does bear a strong resemblance to the missing Maria, but not enough to make identification certain, after allowing for the effect of ten years and the strange life she has been leading. Bruno accepts her unquestioningly as his wife, but others are doubtful. A former lover of Maria's actually brings forth another woman whose circumstantial history gives her even stronger claims to being the real Maria. In the end, the rescued cabaret singer leaves—unable to live longer in an atmosphere of doubt, in spite of the love she feels for Bruno. In the present screen version, however, she accepts Bruno's profession of love as enough to remove all doubt, and remains. Furthermore, in the screen play, it is made plain in a dozen small ways, that the rescued girl is actually an imposter.

The original play was, of course, merely another vehicle for the recurrent Pirandello theme that whatever you want to believe is true is actually true, and as this is an absurd and degrading theme, I can not quarrel as strongly with the Hollywood changes as I should be tempted to in many similar cases. There is really no excuse for changing the basic idea of an artist, but in this particular case there was no excuse for Pirandello's idea in the first place. "Subtlety" of the Pirandello variety is merely an excuse for mental sloppiness, and is not true art. I doubt, however, if Hollywood made the changes for any such reason.

The main interest centers in the increasingly fine work of Greta Garbo. Her mastery of English is now almost complete, and with it she has naturally added variety and flexibility to her voice, which is now soft and well modulated. Also, in many of the scenes, she displays a hitherto lacking sense of wit and humor. There will long be many people holding an instinctive grievance against Miss Garbo because of the "vampire" parts with which she was first introduced to the screen. That should blind no one, however, to her subsequent growth as one of the very fine actresses of modern times, with variety, nuance and enlarging technical skill. She has the unmistakable mark of the true artist, namely, that her power of creating illusion comes from within and is not a mere matter of external technique.

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BOOKS

The Immortal Jester

The Works of Francis Rabelais, by Albert Jay Nock and Catherine Rose Wilson. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. $15.00.

PROFESSOR ALBERT JAY NOCK and Miss Catherine Rose Wilson have rendered a distinguished service to literature in the devoted labor they have lavished upon the preparation of their superb and authoritative edition of the works of Francis Rabelais. An annotated edition of the Urquhart-le Motteux translation was issued by the Bohn Library early in the nineteenth century; but the present work surpasses, as well in the quality of the critical comment as in the generous and entertaining amplitude of the notes, any other work in English which has dealt with the life, character and genius of the greatest figure woven by the French spirit into the glowing texture of the Renaissance.

The editors have done well to record their opinion that the translation by Sir Thomas Urquhart, the Scots physician, and Pierre le Motteux, the French merchant, is to be placed in the very front rank of all translations which have been made into the English language, since its only serious rival for such an honor is the King James version of the Bible.

The racy, fanciful, vivid, energetic style of Urquhart disports itself with unsated zest upon every page, now sharpening the edge of satire, now lending virility to humor, again imparting the etcher's clarity to graphic portrayal. The adventures, the disputes, the reflections of Gargantua, of Pantagruel, of Panurge and their companions, are flashed before the eye of the reader in a swift-moving panorama of changing scenes, in which battle and siege, the ocean's perils, the amenities of the boudoir and of the tavern, are recreated in bewildering profusion by the deft manipulation of a magician's wand; though the company be not always edifying, it is seen [and flayed] for what it is, with laughter, keenness, satire, truth.

Consider Panurge—"a very gallant man of his person, only that he was a little lewd. . . . Yet notwithstanding, he had three score and three tricks to help himself at his need, of which the most honorable and most ordinary was by the way of filching; for he was a quarrelsome fellow, a sharper, drinker, roisterer, scowerer, and a very dissolute and debauched fellow, if there were any in Paris; otherwise, and in all matters else, the best man in the world."

Consider du Doubet's comment on Pantagruel's defense of his action in the burning up of four asses' loads of legal papers which had been submitted to him in the case of Lord Kissbreech vs. Lord Suckfist, after the Parliament had consulted in the matter for six and forty weeks. Du Doubet maintained "that Pantagruel had said well and what was right, in affirming that these records, bills of inquest, replies, rejoinders, exceptions, depositions, and other such diableries of truth-entangling writs, were but engines wherewith to overthrow justice. . . ."

It would be doing gross injustice to the editors if it were here attempted to summarize, or to select quotations from their admirable Introduction, which fills nearly two hundred pages, and presents the life history of Rabelais as far as diligent research has sufficed to reveal it. Nor would it be doing service to the reader to abstract from the rich narrative comment which accompanies the description of the Five Books. The Introduction should be read through from its first to its last page by everyone who wishes to get the full measure of enjoyment to be obtained from the perusal of Rabelais's text.

What may here be properly undertaken is a brief reference to some of the striking events associated with the period in which Rabelais lived, circumstances which must have exerted a profound influence upon the development of his genius and the character of his writings. Few men indeed, have belonged more wholeheartedly or absolutely to their eras.

Rabelais was born during the last decade of the fifteenth century at the time when France was enjoying the full stimulation of the new vigor imparted to Western civilization by the Revival of Learning, the Renaissance and the Reformation. Among the earliest stories to enthral his eager mind were those of the discovery of the West Indies by Columbus, of the Pacific Ocean by Balboa, of Florida by Ponce de Leon, of the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartholomeo Diaz, of Vasco da Gama's visit to India—all reaching him as the news of the day, fresh from the lips of those who had taken part in these exploits. The true novelty and adventure of them, as is well known to readers of chronicles of the times, were enhanced for European consumption by the play of vigorous imaginations and a relish for the fantastic, a common taste of sea-faring men.

As a youth Rabelais was a student in the Franciscan monastery at Fontenay le Comte in the Vendée, when the flower of French and English chivalry was contending for prizes in the tournaments of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in the presence of Francis I of France, Henry VIII of England and Cardinal Wolsey. Rabelais entered the monastery in 1520, when every lover of art was still mourning the death of Leonardo da Vinci. It was in this year that Michelangelo designed the tomb of Lorenzo the Magnificent, that Pope Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther, that the elder Scaliger retired to the castle of Vico Nuovo to lay the foundations of that prodigious learning which was to earn for him the distinction of being the greatest scientist and the greatest literary man in Europe.

Within the next twenty years, Francis I established the College of France, the National Library and the first Royal Printing Press, and welcomed Benvenuto Cellini to Paris; Pizzaro conquered Peru, and Cortes, Mexico; the Jesuit Order was founded by Ignatius Loyola; and there were printed in Italian "Il Principe" of Machiavelli, and in French the "Cronique et hystoire faicte par messire Philippe de Comines."

When it is reflected that Rabelais spent the first half of his life under the bewitchment of these stirring events, and that to the overt influence of the times in which he lived must be added that more subtle influence which is imposed upon a receptive nature by a prolonged study of the masterpieces of Greek and of Latin literature, it is no cause for surprise that men of inferior talents, of duller wits, of narrower minds, of less generous temperament, should have been puzzled during three centuries to account for the strange juxtaposition, in his writings, of deep learning, indecorous humor and coarse allusion.

This mixture of ingredients has, it would seem, no mysterious origin. Here was a man of keen observation, of quick perception, of bright intelligence, of delicate sensibility, who, during the most impressionable years of his growth, was, time and again, wrought to intense excitement by a succession of intellectual Mafeking Nights, Armistice Days and three-ring circuses. It was upon these occasions, no doubt, that all that was jocund, mischievous and boyish in that great spirit tore asunder the bonds of scholastic convention and rushed forth to seek relief and refreshment in the companionship of all the merry rogues, living or dead, who would raise a hearty laugh at some of our animal traits, but who never went out behind the barn to snigger about them.

ALLAN IRELAND.

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Norse Trails in America

The Kensington Stone, by Hjalmar R. Holand. Ephraim, Wisconsin: Pioneer Publishing Company. $3.15, postpaid.

A CERTAIN Genoese navigator—if he was indeed a Genoese, and not, as many are ready to assert, a Spaniard, Portuguese, Catalan, Basque or Jew—has undeniably "got the breaks" from the Muse of History. Gregory Mason recently published a book entitled "Columbus Came Late." His point is that the Mayan peoples of Mexico and Central America had achieved a very considerable civilization long before the prow of the Santa Maria ever clove the blue waters of the Caribbean. But it is constantly becoming more evident that in another sense, in relation to the whole story of European discovery of America in historic times, Columbus did indeed come late. It has in fact been evident for a long while, and our school children are taught as a matter of course that Lief Ericsson prowled around these shores soon after the turn of the first millenium A. D. Yet history remains feeble in the face of a jingle—

> "In Fourteen Hundred and Ninety-two
> Columbus sailed the ocean blue."

In the summer of 1898 a farmer named Olof Ohman dug up, on his farm near Kensington, Minnesota, a stone about thirty-one inches long, eighteen inches wide and six inches thick, upon which were inscribed many strange signs, obviously man-made. About this Kensington Stone there has been so much written, in magazines, newspapers and books, that the bibliography given by Mr. Holand occupies six pages, yet includes only half a dozen titles appearing in a previous bibliography, also six pages long, compiled by the Museum Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society.

In company with Mr. G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, the English authority on pre-Columbian American history, and other prudent men, this reviewer confesses his conversion to the belief that farmer Ohman's stone records the passage of a band of Scandinavians through the Northwest in the Year of Our Lord 1362. The Kensington inscription is in Scandinavian runes, intermingled with which are a few Roman letters. Translated, it states that eight Swedes and twenty-two Norwegians on an exploration journey from Vinland lost ten men in an attack by Indians near that spot, and calls on the Blessed Virgin for protection.

A Scandinavian rune-stone found in the heart of Minnesota and dated 1362 certainly requires explanation. Its authenticity has of course been attacked from every angle. Farmer Ohman and his immediate neighbors have been accused of forging it. Mr. Holand shows the impossibility of that. An itinerant Swedish ex-minister who lived around about in that neck of the woods has been suspected; no proof can be found, and all the probabilities lie heavily against the supposition. Before the stone came under serious scholarly scrutiny, the tree stump under which it was found had been destroyed; but the finders and others who saw it soon after it was dug up, attest in numerous affidavits that the roots of the tree had grown around it; while experts in the matter of the growth of aspen trees assert, from descriptions of the destroyed stump, that it must have been seventy years old. The supposition that some chance wandering Scandinavian scholar during the actual historical period of the settlement of the Northwest, but prior to 1828 (seventy years before the discovery) could have committed the fraud, is pretty well disposed of alike by Mr. Holand's researches and by his logic.

Many objections have been made, however, to the linguistic irregularities of the inscription; it has been called full of anachronisms and grammatical errors and even of English words. Mr. Holand has devoted years of patient research to this phase of the problem, as a result of which he is able to cite instances in Scandinavian manuscripts of 1362 or earlier, paralleling every suspected word, spelling or locution in the Kensington runes. Here his proofs are incontrovertible, and it must be admitted that such an inscription could have been written by a Swedish or Norwegian adventurer in 1362, while the logic is inescapable that a later forger would have adhered to the formal rules of grammar, and could not have invented the colloquialisms, the evidences of language in flux, which actually mark the inscription.

The most fascinating part of Mr. Holand's argument is the strong chain of suppositions by which he connects the Kensington Stone and its "eight Swedes and twenty-two Norwegians" with the expedition undertaken by Paul Knutson, at the command of King Magnus, to reëstablish Christianity among certain Greenland colonists who had fallen away from the Faith. It is known that Knutson sailed in 1355; that the apostates had vanished from Greenland before he reached their settlement; that his expedition did not return until 1364. For the further ingenious—and convincing—argument that Knutson reached and deeply explored the mainland of America searching for the lost sheep, the reader must be referred to Mr. Holand's book. It is in every respect a pattern of sound, conscientious scholarship. Those who believe it important that history be made to shed her fictions and tell the truth, cannot afford to omit reading it. The priority of Scandinavian exploration of this land over Columbian discovery seems established. Perhaps in time some scholar will marshal the evidence, abundant in medieval books though as yet unsupported by American finds, that the Irish got here centuries before the Norsemen. Apart from its scholarship, "The Kensington Stone" is a fascinating book, from the early chapter which tells how Erik Thorwaldson became the first Western realtor by giving the name Greenland to a harsh, barren territory in order to attract settlers, to the final speculations on the origins of the Mandans, those unique Indians who showed abundant signs of white blood.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL.

Blessed Are the Merciful

The Samaritans of Molokai, by Charles J. Dutton. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $3.00.

INTEREST in the singularly heroic life of Father Damien increases with the passing years. Recently the literature about the Apostle to the Lepers has been enriched by the biography by Miss Caudwell and by this present volume which adds to the poignant story of Damien a fascinating account of the career of Joseph Dutton, the American layman who was the Belgian priest's helper and, in the secular sphere, his successor.

The author, a Unitarian clergyman, writes with scholarly detachment, simple eloquence and a wealth of human understanding. He prefixes his biographical studies with a sketch of the history of leprosy from its probable origin in Egypt through its devastating course in Europe where it was checked only by that other deadly plague, the Black Death. There are today millions of cases of leprosy in certain parts of Asia and some two thousand sufferers in the United States. The scourge was brought from China to Hawaii, its spread there being tragically facilitated by the informality of social relations prevailing in the islands. Mr. Dutton's book concentrates on the leper colony of Molokai.

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The absorbing story of Father Damien is told here again with great insight and sympathy. Then follows the history of Ira Dutton who, as Brother Joseph, was to win immortality along the same rugged road of self-abnegation. Born in Vermont, he spent his boyhood in Wisconsin, where he received his first schooling from his mother. His latent powers of leadership and resourcefulness were brought out by the Civil War in which he served with distinction. His subsequent marriage was unhappy, and in efforts to find himself again he engaged in various kinds of work both in private and government employ. He grew increasingly serious of purpose, and in 1883 he became a Catholic, determining at the same time to spend the rest of his life—which proved to be a long one—in penance for his sins. His biographer is convinced that Dutton exaggerated both the number and nature of his derelictions. It was this delicacy of conscience which brought him to Molokai with the humble ambition to become "just a servant" to his fellow-men. Joseph Dutton was a Godsend to the already stricken Damien, with whom he got on admirably. Serene and equable in temperament, the new arrival was a striking contrast to his impetuous and high-tempered chief.

The last chapters chronicle the more than forty years of arduous labors which Dutton carried on after Damien's death. During those years he saw the once neglected settlement to which the sacrifices of the Belgian priest had brought widespread attention grow into the finest medical center of its kind. The old Grand Army man in his self-chosen exile received no dearth of recognition. Honors were heaped on him by Church and State, and he spent most of the hours of each night in a vain effort to answer the enormous number of letters which came to him alike from the humble and the exalted of a great part of the earth.

People of all types will enjoy this book and be the better for having read it. The author is already known to many as a writer of detective fiction. These readers, too, will not be disappointed. They will find a new sort of thrill by acquaintance with this biographical work which also deals with a mystery —the mystery which is the adventuring human soul.

GEORGIANA PUTNAM MCENTEE.

Alsace-Lorraine and the Germans

Die Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung Elsass-Lothringens 1871 bis 1918. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag des Elsass-Lothringen Institutes.

THE PROBLEM of Alsace-Lorraine will doubtless never be solved. Historical, ethnological, cultural and economic circumstances have qualified the outlook of citizens who, in an age of nationalism, will probably never be either French or German. For the student inside Germany today (and this is especially true of the Institute which has published the volume named above), Alsace-Lorraine is primarily a territory into which Teutonic blood and effort has been poured, which therefore continues to possess a definite Teutonic value, but the political future of which will in all human probability never again be determined in the Bismarckian fashion.

The present large and handsome volume contains a series of essays which review German achievement in Alsace-Lorraine during the years when this province was part of the Hohenzollern Empire. It demonstrates in a large, cautious, objective manner that the development of industry and government was extraordinarily rapid and beneficial. There is a refreshing absence of chauvinism, though the several writers are doubtless motivated by patriotic sentiment. Accordingly, the book will be

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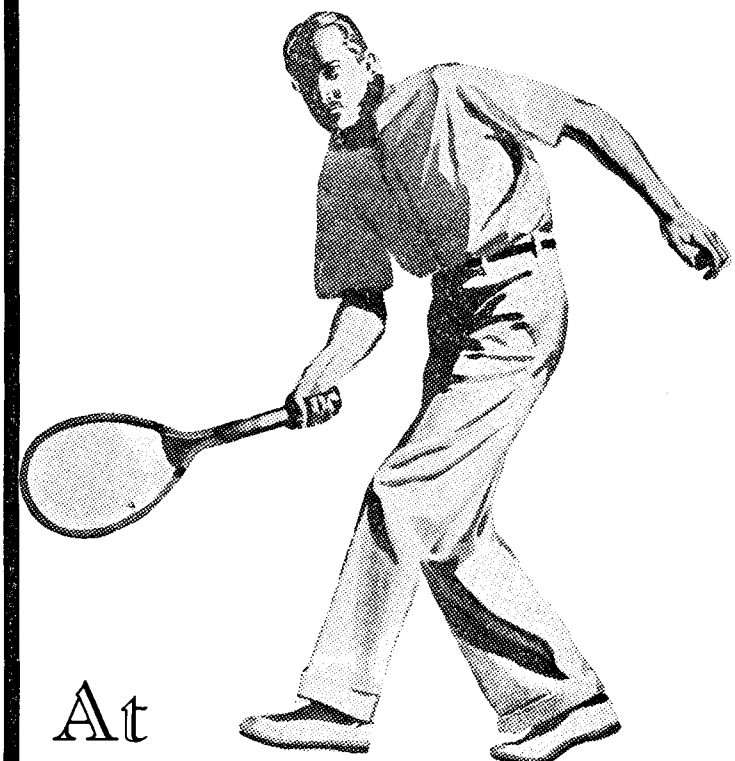

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a useful addition to the historian's library, and at least one or two of the conclusions should pass into the general consciousness of political and economic fact. It is no longer possible to doubt either that the Germans governed Alsace-Lorraine very well (though they made blunders of political tact, and occasionally allowed the military too free a hand), or that their management contributed notably to the welfare of the province.

An introductory paper by Dr. Martin Spahn outlines the general situation and is doubtless the only part of the book to which a marked savor of partizanship attaches. There follow in sequence authoritative discussions of mining—in all its phases—steel production, textile manufacturing, agriculture, crafts, railroading and government. The result is a first-rate economic and social history of the province. In addition the book has the value of being an exhaustive commentary on the natural and industrial resources of the region. Excellent illustrations and charts accompany the text. This work should, therefore, meet with a welcome from all American students interested in the subject-matter.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Two Misleading Books

The Black Mass, by Peter Krassnoff. New York: Duffield and Green. $2.50.

Russia in the Name of God, by Vladimir Brenner. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

THESE are dangerous books, and lamentable in so far as they prove the degrading condition to which some Russian emigrés have sunk, as well as the complete disregard for truth unfortunately found in so many modern Russian writers, combined with absence of real talent. It would seem as if the entire Russian intelligence had perished in the cataclysm that destroyed the Russian Empire.

General Krassnoff's books, with the exception of the first one, which won for him a well-deserved reputation as a clever writer, all have the same theme and the same object, namely, to prove that Bolshevism is the pet child of the devil, who employs Jews as his emissaries. Mr. Stalin's government should be fought with other weapons than such silly lucubrations. Even in the handling of his subject General Krassnoff has no literary technique. The story of the gradual envelopment of the girl, Svetlana, by the power of Satan might have been made dramatic instead of absurd. The Black Mass he describes to us is simply a meeting of Russian sectarians, the Khlystys. The book is nothing more than an attempt to prove that the fall of the Russian Empire was due to occult forces. This is absurd. Apart from this, his work is horrible in the sense that it tries to associate the Roman Catholic religion with diabolic and disgusting practices.

After reading the other volume, called "Russia in the Name of God," it is difficult to judge the author's purpose in writing it and what his political and religious opinions are. He can hardly be a Greek Orthodox, because his book reveals such complete ignorance of the customs and ritual of the Greek Church. He speaks of the headdress of an archbishop or a monk as a *kamylaichon*. The *kamylayka*, not *kamylaichon*, was a high cap worn by certain members of the white or parish clergy. The headdress of monks and bishops, was called a *klobouk*, and black in color with a long veil falling from it. The description of the dress of Archbishop Anastasius (page 144) is ridiculous. The same thing can be said of the prayers mentioned in the book. One never prays "for the congregation" in the Greek Church, but for "all Orthodox Christians."

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And the rite of an installation of a bishop in his new see is absolutely different from what Mr. Brenner represents. His account of what went on in the synod and among Russian churchmen before the war is absolutely fantastic. The story of Bishop Hermogen is invented.

The book would not be deserving of notice, if it did not contain misleading statements as to efforts made by the Catholic Church to bring about a union of the Greek Orthodox Church with Rome. The thought of such a union had existed long before the World War broke out. The first person who gave it utterance, and discussed it openly, was the great Russian philosopher, Vladimir Solovieff, together with a most remarkable woman, a convert to Roman Catholicism, the Princess Elizabeth Volkhonsky. To their support came different dignitaries of the Orthodox Church, among others, Metropolitan Anthony, a wonderful personality who at the time of his death was working on a plan of a possible union between the great Eastern and Western Churches. One thing must be established beyond doubt, and this is that the first steps toward union came from Russia and not from Rome, which at first accepted them with great caution and even distrust. And certainly the Pope never sent emissaries to Russia after the Revolution to try and convert the Russian population to Catholicism. And, finally, the entire chapter relating the conversation of Bishop Anastasius with a Roman Catholic priest must be recognized as pure invention and even that not of the first class.

The book is but a compilation of the gossip going about in certain circles of Russian society during, as well as before, the war. The descriptions of the havoc wrought by the latter are true in some respects and misleading in others. Some parts are odious: for instance, the description of the interview of Nicholas II with his mother after his abdication. This is a cruel libel on the unfortunate Empress Dowager, who hastened to her son with sympathy and love as soon as she heard of his misfortune. And neither I, nor any who had occasion to see the Empress familiarly, ever noticed that she had a "masklike face [according to Mr. Brenner] fixed into a permanent smile owing to an unsuccessful operation." But the book is written with talent as well as passion, which makes it exceedingly dangerous, and some of its arguments against a reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome are positively harmful, especially when presented to an uninformed people. The book even lacks the redeeming feature, it seems fair to state, of having been written in good faith.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

Life of a Poet

Eden Tree, by Wytter Bynner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

ONE MAY be allowed to admire Wytter Bynner inordinately if for no other reason than that he is at the present time able to launch a new long poem, exquisitely printed and strikingly bound in green jade linen. Like a good wine, Wytter Bynner needs no bush.

"Eden Tree" may be taken as an attempt to sift the ashes of experience at fifty into some sort of coherent and unified piles. But it is a ghastly record of disillusionment. His previous long poem, "The New World," indeed sought order in disorder, but it was a universe in which love made some law. The succeeding years have not been too kind, however, and here we have the sort of writing that follows a success too easily attained, too many good looks, too many adventures—and wretchedness. A lyric kaleidoscope of a young man's years against the shifting

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W. GRIFFIN KELLEY, *Headmaster*

lights of Manhattan, friendships both masculine and feminine, memories of the Orient, some dissipation, some questionings about God and destiny—and the end. It is a disquieting book, but an honest and sincere one, despite the stabbing cynicism of verses like the following:

"Feel the nail
Stand friendly in your foot
And know that little comes of love but this."

The identification of human sorrowing with the person of Our Lord is deeply moving and deeply Christian.

One feels relieved when at intervals the poetic power fails, and the tragedy flows by unfelt. Yet even the compensations the poet sets himself as an escape from agony, compensations such as the "Forbidden City," which

"lay like a pool of lotuses, of cool forgetful flowers";

or "the lifted glass in the limp hands," which is momentarily forgotten as he looks across to the skyline where

"the diagonal faraway birds
Were singing in the dawn. He could feel them pass
The thin spires of St. Patrick's, brushing the bells
with their wings";

or the acceptance of friendship as "the double seal of solitude" become, as it were, strange steps leading toward some mystical experience that comes only to the faithless:

"One must bless
One's self with a sign of loneliness. . .
The cross was a thing like this.
Those nails become friends, become lovers, they are a kiss,
Upon palm and ankle; and that hole in the side
Becomes the crystal-eyed
Pain through which to see
And to be
Alone."

I am not sure that "Eden Tree" is great poetry, but I am afraid it represents pretty much what many young chaps in the late twenties are thinking these days. This gifted man differs from his brothers only in possessing to a singular degree the power of self-analysis and expression. Wytter Bynner need not tease himself with the thought of Time's rejection slips: it is a fine thing to have been able to trace a so deeply personal, yet in the best sense impersonal, account of what is called life.

SPEER STRAHAN.

Individual Song

High Mowing, by Marion Canby. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.00.

MARION CANBY'S spirit reaches out for one thing—liberty—the liberty found in air and sun, hills and silences; no less in the intercourse of free minds. "High Mowing" has the quality of a spring, long undiscovered, that has suddenly overflowed its banks with a rush, exulting in the effort. The water of this spring is so limpidly clear that one may see its depths. In such a book as this there is no room for cant or sentimentalities. Even that vacuum afforded by loss and death is accepted as part of a scheme that does not lie to man. Although there is a poignancy in the poems that is deeply

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moving, they are salted by humor, and can be turned to as a refreshment after the exhibitionism displayed in modern verse.

But it is when the author joins hands with Nature as a comrade, becoming part and parcel of Nature's wild despairs and calms, that she is at her poetic best. Such poems as "Explicit," "To A Fine Spirit," "But Where?" "But First I Saw Them Live," "Rebels," "Timid One," "Done For," "Rough Work" are of a taller stature than the others. Had she published these and no others the contribution would still have been a real one. "But First I Saw Them Live" excels them all in vigor:

> "Live! There's a word to give
> The lie to negative,
> The dirk to death—
> Its very sound is like an anvil's ring!
> What can a state inhuman
> Mean to man or woman?
> Did ever bird fly up without a wing?
> What man has walked a mile without his breath?
> No man can image forth such vital loss. . . ."

In contrast, how the reviewer sympathizes with the point of view expressed in "Timid One," which might be an eternal portrait of immaturity for young girls to exult in:

> "I want to be beautiful, beautiful, beautiful,
> Incandescent with truth;
> Instead of always dutiful, dutiful
> And overcome with youth."

Individual and definite as signboards are the titles of the various poetic moods: "Come No Nearer," "It Happened This Way," "Done For," "Rough Work," "Heap No Coals." Were there space, one might enlarge upon many more of them. The author has not fully explored the virgin forest of her spirit; but she has cut down trees, made clearings and tapped the spring. What has come out of it is her essential self.

LAURA BENÉT.

The Best for Children

Children's Institutions, by John M. Cooper. Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press. $5.00.

FATHER COOPER'S book is a study of programs and policies in Catholic Children's institutions in the United States. The survey was made under the auspices of the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the Commonwealth Fund. Its 720 pages are a collection of cases dealing with what has been proven to be the best and most beneficial for children in about one hundred institutions personally visited and investigated by a staff worker.

A tremendous amount of material relating to religious care, moral training, education, discipline, health, recreation, social problems, housing and administration was brought together and was well arranged. The study is the first step in a plan to provide literature for a uniform training course in Child Care with a critically selected curriculum. No doubt, it is a valuable contribution towards this end. All who are engaged in caring for children in institutions will rejoice in having this material placed at their disposal.

The importance of this subject may be appreciated by all who are familiar with the complete report of the Wickersham Committee. The proper training of children as the very foundation of the social health of our country cannot be overstressed.

KILIAN J. HENNRICH.

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Briefer Mention

Albert the Good and the Victorian Reign, by Hector Bolitho. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $3.50.

HAVING read a lot about him from the pens of English journalists of his own generation, one really cannot help asking if the Prince Consort's goodness was not an entirely negative quality. It seems incredible that Hector Bolitho's 350 pages of saccharine prosody should issue at this late date, if the object is to establish an English admiration for the prince because of his goodness. The real motive behind the book would seem to be, in the opinion of one who has sensed the passage of the Victorian era, the establishment of the legitimacy of Albert. With this end in view, the author specifies the evidence he received from a fellow-writer as the only proof. According to this informant Albert's mother, Luise, Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, began her love affair with Lieutenant von Haustein, four years after the birth of Albert. Many writers of the past have splashed the bar sinister across the shield of the Prince Consort. However, the greatest reason for his dislike by the British people was his inactivity. They loved outdoor life and looked to their rulers to foster it. Prince Albert didn't. Victoria insisted on being Queen and Albert, who died in his early forties, proved an excellent financier. So rich is the Hanoverian dynasty at the present time that a well-informed parliamentarian proclaimed in Westminster a couple of years ago that if George V should renounce his kingship, he would be England's richest commoner.

Miner, by F. C. Boden. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $2.50.

THIS beautifully-written little novel rends the heart. It deals with the courageous workaday life of a poor British miner in Derbyshire. We see him rising before dawn, taking the poorest of corporation-run trams to the pithead, and descending the shaft to work in the bowels of the earth from six to three. Later, after a strike and lock-out, the hours are lengthened to four o'clock. We see him returning in the afternoon forspent with labor, with bending double in a two-foot seam, and with breathing coal gas. Occasionally he takes out the girl whom he would marry, but so tied down is he by life in the mine—now on long time, now on short time, and even on the dole—that he despairs of escape from the daily round. He sees men killed by explosions and cave-ins. He can do nothing but report for work when there is work. Love-idyll and family life are both subjected to the gloom of the mine. The tenor, nevertheless, is hardly fatalistic or Socialistic. It is poetic. The chastening leads to a renunciatory concluding note of peace.

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